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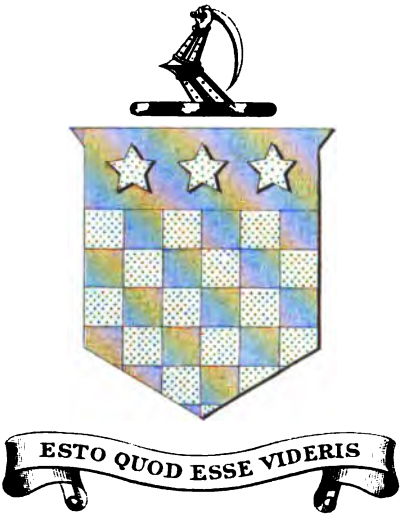

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RICHARD SAVAGE

John Leech

The Death of Sinclair

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John Leech

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London. Richard Bentley & Son 1896

RICHARD SAVAGE

A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE

BY CHARLES WHITEHEAD,

AND ILLUSTRATED BY

JOHN LEECH

A NEW EDITION
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
HARVEY ORRINSMITH

LONDON
RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON
Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty
1896

INTRODUCTION.

As the Illustrations play so important a part in the book now before the reader, it has been suggested that a few words concerning the designer and etcher of these plates might form an appropriate and acceptable introduction to the work.

At the outset I would disclaim any wish or intention to pose as a critic. Such men as Thackeray, Dr. John Brown, and Dean Hole have already given their estimate of Leech's power, and I should cast aside my feeble pen in dismay were it to be supposed that I attached any importance to my personal opinions as to the qualities and value of his work.

I could wish that this appreciation of John Leech had fallen into worthier hands than mine, and my only plea for undertaking this introduction is that I heartily admired and loved the man.

Love and admiration do not always go hand-in-hand, but John Leech commanded both, and to his numerous admirers even the trivial matters that I have to set down may prove interesting.

In my youthful days it was my good fortune to be, for some years, very intimately acquainted with him. It is

true that I was but a boy when our acquaintance began, but he was a very young man, and the difference in our ages was not sufficient to prevent a very strong sympathy between us.

Leech was fond of me and I of him. No one who came near him would fail to feel the charm of his character and temper, his thoroughly genial nature, and his gentle manliness.

When I say that he resided in my father's house for some eighteen months, it will be easily understood how close my knowledge came to be of his temper and moods. To pass through the ordeal of domestic difficulties that will arise in a small household such as was ours, and to come out triumphantly with everyone's good opinion, is the clearest indication of true amiability.

He had a smile for us all, and a kind word for everyone, even including a new housemaid, who one day announced him to a roomful of visitors as "*Mr. Eel!*"

The glamour of the personal charm, in daily intercourse with so delightful a nature, may perhaps have induced me to form an exaggerated opinion of the value of my opportunities of acquiring a knowledge of Leech's character, but I seemed to know him better and to esteem him more and more as each month went by.

His marked amiability did not prevent him from being outspoken in his hatred of sham and cant, but he dealt fairly both with tongue and pencil; the ugliness he depicted was never repulsive. He was not of those who will not condescend to be charming lest their work be accused of being meretricious.

This time in Judd Street was to me delightful. I was a constant and welcome visitor to his rooms, and he used jokingly to say that I assisted him with his etching—at

that time his principal work—but I am unconscious of any service rendered at this period. It is true I helped to build up the waxen walls around the etched designs preparatory to the "biting in," and I know I burnt several holes in his green baize table-cover by spilling the aqua fortis.

We used to walk out together by the then called New Road to King's Cross, where a man named Winkles sold steel and copper plates in—of all odd places—the very King's Cross itself, under the statue of William IV., which then surmounted a most hideous structure. Within a stone's-throw was the Small-pox Hospital, and I have a vivid recollection of Leech's vehement comments on the horrible laxity which permitted such a plague-spot in our midst. All that ground is now covered by the terminus of the Great Northern Railway.

Leech was born on Ludgate Hill, and was proud to be a Cockney. When Percival Leigh was writing the "Comic Latin Grammar" I heard him tell Leech that he would have given a new version of St. Paul's well-known cry as "*Civis Londiniensis sum*"; and in later life Leech often asserted that, although he might possibly have preferred a country life, surrounded by horses and dogs, of which he was passionately fond, yet if compelled to live in a town, the Metropolis was the only fit dwelling-place.

Surely only London could have evoked the wonderful sketches he has given to us. Touches of truth, scratches of character, suggestions of locality—how freely all came from his observant eye and facile pencil! The spontaneity of his work is apparent everywhere.

It was a lucky thing for the world when it was found to be impossible to carry out his father's intention to make Leech a surgeon. Referring to such an intention Douglas

Jerrold said to my father that "although there were any number of leeches, there was but one LEECH."

I digress to say that Leech was a great admirer of Jerrold, and those who, like myself, knew the latter well will endorse Leech's saying of him:

> "He never did a cruel thing,
> And seldom said a kind one."

I quote this in all reverence, for Jerrold was one of my kindest and most helpful friends in my youth and in maturer years.

Leech's first work in lithography did not bring either success or remuneration, and I always understood that the turning-point in his career was his introduction by my father to the then editor of *Bell's Life in London*, Vincent George Dowling, who saw possibilities in the sketches, crude but brimful of character, which appeared in the columns of that paper, almost the first in London to give illustrations in the text.

While under our roof Leech had acquired a very considerable facility with the etching-point, and many of his plates at this time were truly admirable. It is interesting to compare the work of this period with his earlier efforts in the illustrations to Theodore Hook's "Jack Brag," executed in 1837. After his youthful practice with pencil and pen the etching-needle was apparently a difficult implement to handle; a somewhat weak and staggering line was here and there visible in that early work.

The needle seemed to wander vaguely and not always in the right direction. The tiny point was not enough to rest upon for a hand accustomed to the use of bolder tools. Hence arose timidity, a fatal hindrance to successful work.

It is not surprising that George Cruikshank, on being

shown the "Jack Brag" plates, expressed no appreciation of the possible future of their creator.

During the time of his sojourn in our house, Leech and my father were on terms of the closest friendship; I do not remember to have heard that an angry word ever passed between them, save on one occasion when some medical students, friends of Albert Smith, were brought together in Leech's rooms. My father was present as a guest; the meeting was prolonged until dawn, and on leaving our house one of the too convivial visitors carried off the knocker of the front door as a memento of a very pleasant evening. My father failed to see the humour of the thing; Judd Street was a quiet and decorous place in those days, and it was only after an apology from Albert Smith that amicable relations were resumed.

In a life so devoid of incident as that of John Leech, it seems odd that, so far as I am aware, the one romantic episode should be, as yet, unrecorded in print. I can vouch for the truth of the story, as I had it fresh from my father's lips. He was walking with Leech through Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, when at a parlour window there suddenly appeared the lovely face of a young lady. It was a beautiful face, and at once attracted Leech's gaze. He seemed to be immediately overcome by a most lively emotion—evidently love at first sight; his admiration was unbounded, his talk was of nothing else, and ended by his avowing his determination to marry should it prove to be possible the owner of the face. Leech left no stone unturned to obtain an introduction to the lady's family; once introduced, his handsome face, winning manner, and his then rapidly growing fame made the way easy, and he very shortly afterwards married the lady of his sudden choice.

Leech's was a face of great sweetness. I can bear witness to the absolute truthfulness of Tom Scott's somewhat commonplace portrait of him that is prefixed to the first of the three volumes of the "Pictures of Life and Character from the Collection of Mr. Punch." What a glorious monument to Leech are these volumes! This portrait is the very effigy of the man as I knew him. The fine portrait which forms the frontispiece to the first volume of Mr. Frith's "John Leech: his Life and Work," is a splendid likeness; but it is, I think, somewhat influenced by the subjective power of its great painter, Sir John Millais. So to speak, it is John Leech *plus* John Millais. In this fine picture may be traced the tinge of sadness that, in my memory, was always in the face. I remember to have observed the same suggestion of sadness in the face of my early friend, Thomas Hood. Both humourists died before attaining the age of fifty.

Leech never wore a moustache, and I have heard him say that he thought it unwarrantable presumption in a civilian to adopt the hirsute ornament. This was in the "forties," when beards were almost unknown in England; a "pair of moustachios," as they were then called, was thought to indicate, at least, an impostor of some sort! It was only on the return of the Guards from the Crimea that the change from the clean-shaven face was inaugurated, and we began to be the bearded race we have since become.

On my return from one of my early visits to Paris, I was perhaps a little vain of my first moustache. I chanced to meet Leech in the street. He looked at me, and took me by the arm, saying: "My dear fellow, come along home with me, and *I'll lend you one of my razors*."

Apropos to this, it should be remembered that Leech was eminently English, and for a long time, perhaps always, decidedly inimical to the foreigner, and disposed to poke fun at him. Who can ever forget his drawing of three Frenchmen—at the Great Exhibition of 1851—suddenly coming upon a washstand?

And the appended legend:

"*Mon Dieu, Alphonse! Regardez donc. Comment appelle-t-on cette machine là?*"

"*Tiens, c'est drôle—mais je ne sais pas.*"

On his marriage, Leech naturally left our home, and began housekeeping at 9, Powis Place, Great Ormond Street, where I was a frequent and welcome visitor. Calling on him one day, I found him busy with a new kind of work. Using the mantelpiece as an easel, he was painting in oils a subject—I think from *Punch*—"An interview between the great Duke of Wellington, and little General Tom Thumb."

On my looking at the canvas, he turned to me, saying: "Ah, Harvey, I may paint as I will, but I shall never be a painter."

I now think that no one knew better than Leech himself the nature of his own limitations. I fancy he would scarcely have laid claim to the title of *Artist* in the usual acceptation of the term. To him chiaroscuro, lighting, composition, and other academical terms meant nothing. He drew intuitively; his work was written in the shorthand of art. As a stenographer of life, an exclamation from him was worth more than an oration from another man. He never failed to tell you the story curtly, but completely and exactly as it should be told.

In this connection I propose to say a few words respecting the Illustrations in this volume.

It is instructive to compare Leech's "Jack Brag" plates executed in 1837 with his "Mr. Ledbury" of 1841-42, and the "Marchioness of Brinvilliers," 1845. The growth of his power with the etching-needle is very striking. This power is admirably shown in the frontispiece of the volume now before us, "The Death of Sinclair." It seems to me that when he went least far he fared best. He well understood the force often gained by omission, and showed it thoroughly in such plates as "Mr. Lemery receives a Hint that he cannot Mistake," where the most is made of the white paper. The same may be said of the "Despair of Ludlow at his Wife's Misconduct," and again in the "Interview between Myte and his New Son-in-law." In "The Crimps surprised by Martin," we observe the same management of light and shade, which makes the plates I have mentioned more successful, I venture to think, than such as "The First Day at School," "The Mock Marriage," and "Ludlow's Madness," where the attempt at carrying the work farther is not attended by a commensurate success. But in all the plates are to be found abundantly character in the faces and figures, richness and variety in the line—a quality conspicuously absent in the work of 1837. Everything tends to inform us that Leech had by this time acquired a mastery over the difficult art of which he was so fond. Later he showed in his drawings on the wood his sense of the quality of line—the "*fat and the lean*," as it has been vulgarly but expressively termed. In the woodcuts we have the intervention of the engraver, and admirable as is the rendering of the facsimile in nearly all cases, we lose the master's own touch as given to us in his etchings. A wood-engraver myself for twenty years, I may perhaps claim to speak on so technical a matter. In "Mr. Myte after the Wedding Dinner," we are

reminded of Cruikshank, but Leech drew his inspiration from no man. His parody of Cruikshank's "Fagin," in *Punch*, 1847, vol. xiii., p. 125, is no copy, but as a rendering of the same idea is an absolute *tour de force*.

If I have added but few trivial details to the simple story of Leech's early life, I trust that at least I have not failed to mark my intense admiration of, and sincere affection for, the dear friend of my youth and early manhood.

HARVEY ORRINSMITH.

HAMPSTEAD,
February, 1896.

PREFACE.

A NEW edition of this Romance affords me an opportunity, of which I am glad to avail myself, of vindicating the character of Savage from an imputation which was revived against him when the first portion of the following pages appeared.

It was alleged that Richard Savage was an impostor, and that Boswell, in his "Life of Johnson," had proved to demonstration that he was so. I did not care to notice the allegation at the time; but, since, I have had reason to believe that, in proportion as it acquired credit, the interest of my tale would suffer detraction. I am induced, therefore, to show that they who renewed this charge against Savage brought it without knowing much about the matter.

In the first place, Boswell not only did not prove Savage to be an impostor, but he did not attempt to do so. He was, indeed, the first to question the truth of Savage's story, but having no proof, he was fain to balance the evidence *pro* and *con*, as well as he could; observing, in conclusion, "I have thus endeavoured to sum up the evidence upon the case as fairly as I can; and the result seems to be, that the world must vibrate in a state of uncertainty as to what was the truth."

But Boswell would hardly have come to this conclusion had he known that the strongest allegation he had to urge against the credibility of Savage could be destroyed. Boswell's allegation is stated in these words: "In order to induce a belief that the Earl Rivers, on account of a criminal connexion with whom Lady Macclesfield is said to have been divorced from her husband by Act of Parliament, had a peculiar anxiety about the child which she bore to him, it is alleged that his lordship gave him his own name, and had it duly recorded in the register of St. Andrew's, Holborn. *I have carefully inspected that register, and I cannot find it.*"

It is nothing to the discredit of Boswell's vigilance, that he could not do so. Ignorant of the following circumstances, it was labour in vain to turn over the parish register.

From "The Earl of Macclesfield's Case," then, which, in 1697-8, was presented to the Lords, in order to procure an Act of Divorce, it appears that Anne, Countess of Macclesfield, under the name of Madam Smith, was delivered of a male child in Fox Court, near Brook Street, Holborn, by Mrs. Wright, a midwife, on Saturday, 16th January, 1696-7, at six in the morning, who was baptised on the Monday following, and registered by the name of *Richard*, the son of John Smith—that the child was christened on Monday, 18th January, in Fox Court, and from the privacy was supposed to be illegitimate. It also appears, that during her confinement the lady wore a mask. Conformable to this statement is the entry in the register of St. Andrew's, Holborn, which is as follows, and which unquestionably records the baptism of Richard Savage, to whom Lord Rivers gave his own Christian name, prefixed to the assumed surname of his mother. "January, 1696-7, *Richard*, son

of John Smith and Mary, in Fox Court, in Gray's-Inn-Lane, baptised the 18th."

Thus we perceive that this part of the traduced poet's story was true, and that the "*falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus*," quoted by Boswell, to overthrow the credit of Savage, might be retorted upon himself.

But the reader shall have another taste of Mr. Boswell.

A strong presumption against the truth of Savage's story is, he observes, his assertion that he could never obtain a legacy left him by his godmother Mrs. Lloyd. "For, if there was such a legacy left, his not being able to obtain payment of it must be imputed to his consciousness that he was not the real person. If he had *a title* to the legacy, he could not have found any difficulty in recovering it; *for* had the executors resisted his claim, the whole costs, as well as the legacy, must have been paid by them, if he had been the child to whom it had been given."

We had hardly quoted this extraordinary piece of legal reasoning, but for the still more extraordinary comment upon it by Mr. Croker, in his edition of "Boswell's Johnson." Mr. Croker says, "*This reasoning is decisive.* If Savage was what he represented himself to be, nothing could have prevented his recovery of the legacy."

I confess, this reasoning is anything but decisive to me. Proof of the identity of Savage was required before he could obtain the bequest—*legal proof* that he was that very Richard, son of John and Mary Smith, born in Fox Court, and registered at St. Andrew's, Holborn. However true the story of Savage may have been, and, as I believe, was, is it credible that he *could* be possessed of such legal proof? The whole matter of the birth was transacted with the utmost caution and secrecy. The obscure lodging, the assumed name, the assumed mask—these do not afford

much reason to expect that Lady Macclesfield would leave at the time, or supply afterwards, such documentary or other evidence as would enable the child legally to prove his parentage.

Leaving Boswell, let us now turn to Mr. Galt, whose shallow speculations upon Richard Savage have imposed upon a few inconsiderate persons. In the year 1831 Mr. Galt published a work which he called "Lives of *the* Players." Into this compilation he inserted a life of Savage, the poet having appeared upon the stage three times during his existence, in a play of his own writing. The Life of Savage, by Galt, appears to have been written with the view of superseding Johnson's admirable biography. Towards this end the author did not lay himself out to discover any fresh facts or materials; nay, he appears to have been unaware that Boswell had written a word about "this vagabond," as, by way of showing his impartiality, he calls Savage at the outset. No; by the unassisted force of his reasoning powers he undertook to show that Johnson was a poor credulous creature, and that Johnson's "Life of Savage" contained within itself its own refutation. One or two specimens from this delectable piece of arrogance may be desirable, as showing to what an extent conceit may be carried, and to what a lowness of reasoning capacity a writer may descend, without being detected by the whole of his readers.

About the time that Savage *invented* his story, says Mr. Galt, "the famous trial of the Annesley family began, and it is curious in how many points the abduction of the heir of that family resembles the pretended machinations of which Savage gives an account of his being himself, both in what was done and intended, the object."

The coincidence is strange, while it would be easy to

show that there *must* be a general resemblance in all such cases. But we put it to every candid person, whether, if Savage had been an impostor, he would not have invented a story as *unlike* as possible to this "famous case." His story was believed in spite, not in consequence, of its resemblance to the Annesley case. We scarcely require further proof of the truth of Savage's statement, than that, being so similar to the other, it stood its ground. Mr. Galt asserts that Lady Macclesfield, now become Mrs. Brett, did deny that Savage was her son, and goes on to observe thus:—"In fact, being persuaded that he was an impostor, *all the extraordinary antipathy with which she regarded him is explained.*"

Very good! We beg the reader to mark well what follows. Wilks the player, touched by the misfortune of Savage, and believing his story, waited upon Mrs. Brett, and obtained from her 60*l.* for the use of her son, with a promise of 150*l.* more. Upon this, Mr. Galt remarks. "This circumstance has been assumed as a proof of the truth of his story; *but I think it affords none;* because, from the gallant address and eloquence of Wilks, 60*l.* might be obtained from a gay and wealthy lady of damaged quality, to relieve a distressed young man, without being any proof of so close a connexion as Savage *had* represented existed between them."

This is a tolerable stretch for a man who sneers at the credulity of Johnson. It is no very likely circumstance that an actor, however gallant and eloquent, would succeed in talking a lady of quality out of 60*l.* for a young gentleman in distress; but it is incredible that he could do so, when the money was to be given to a young fellow who had been persecuting the lady solicited, by a flagrant imposture. Mr. Galt forgot that he had said just before

that Mrs. Brett's "extraordinary antipathy was explained." How is it possible to reconcile the gift and the antipathy, except by a belief of Savage's story?

To show how little Mr. Galt knew of the subject upon which he undertook to write, I quote the following passage: —"Dr. Johnson says that the Duke of Dorset told Savage that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman. It is surprising that the Doctor, in repeating this story, was not astonished at its absurdity; it being ridiculous to suppose that his Grace would make use of any such expression, in speaking of one who, by the nature of his birth, was precluded from even pretending to rank."

This comes of writing and reasoning in utter ignorance. The Duke of Dorset might have said, and, I doubt not, did say, what has been attributed to him. The Earl of Macclesfield, instead of suing the Ecclesiastical Court, proceeded at once to Parliament for a divorce. He obtained an act, which, having a retrospective operation, illegitimated Savage, *who was already born*,—an act so unprecedented, that it did not pass without a strong protest being entered on the Journals of the House of Lords by several peers. Hence, the strong expression of the Duke of Dorset.

But enough of this. Richard Savage was the son of Earl Rivers and the Countess of Macclesfield, who, after her divorce, married Colonel Brett. There cannot be a reasonable doubt of the truth of this story. While a youth, he was an associate of the players at Drury Lane Theatre, when Brett was one of the patentees, whose sufferance of him was a tacit concession of his claim. He was patronised by Steele, the intimate friend of Brett and his wife. He was on terms of acquaintance with Lady Rochford, a daughter of Lord Rivers. During the space of two years, he lived as a guest in the house of Lord

Tyrconnel, the nephew of Mrs. Brett. His story was universally believed. Four times during his life was it made public, and no attempt was ever put forth to contradict its truth, or to invalidate one statement contained in it. The year after his death, the powerful hand of Johnson dispersed the story over the kingdom. Mrs. Brett was yet living. Did she offer a syllable of reply to the tremendous accusations brought against her? Did Lord Tyrconnel advance one word on her behalf? Both were silent. Five and thirty years afterwards, Johnson incorporated, without the alteration of a word, the "Life of Savage" with the "Lives of the Poets." Boswell, some years after Johnson's decease, and fifty years after the death of Savage, originated a doubt of the truth of his story; but even Boswell confesses, "supposing him to be an impostor, it seems strange that Lord Tyrconnel, the nephew of Lady Macclesfield (Mrs. Brett), should patronise him, and admit him as a guest in his family."

For my part, I cannot understand this fond leaning towards Mrs. Brett. This notable lady had a sufficiency of assurance; was possessed of abilities; had money with which she might, in a moment, have secured the services of a hack author of adequate talent; and yet it is reserved for a Boswell and for Galt to convince the world that Mrs. Brett's son died in his infancy, that Savage was the son of the nurse, and that he passed himself off for the child of the lady. A miserable imposture at the best, this clamorous claim of illegitimacy, preferred to one of the most infamous women then living in England. But miserable as it might have been, it required, that it might be successful, something more than a bold face and a strenuous persistance. How came Savage by his education? How did the son of the poor nurse qualify himself

for the assumption of the young gentleman? "'Fore God! this is a more excellent tale than the other." He who could believe this, would have sworn allegiance to Lambert Simnel in the very kitchen of Henry VII., and have pronounced his spit a sceptre. There are some people in the world that love truth as a lover his mistress, who dare not look upon her when she is present, but sees her in dreams and everything about him when she is far away.

I am strongly persuaded that Savage devoutly believed he was the son of Lord Rivers and the Countess of Macclesfield. His strong and violent resentments; his insolence, which too often looked like ingratitude; all his faults, his follies, and his vices, were the consequence of that conviction on his part. It is difficult to note the weakness of the man without feeling a contempt for him; but his character is intelligible only on a supposition of the sincerity of his belief. I have drawn his character to the best of my ability, in the following pages, and as I believe he himself would have portrayed it, for Savage was never careful to conceal his faults. To those who have hinted that I drew from myself, I have nothing to say. Words are wanted upon men who from malice will not, or from ignorance cannot, dissociate the author from his subject. The calumny or the dulness, as the case may be, is old, applied to those who write fiction in the first person.

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I am strongly persuaded that Savage devoutly believed he was the son of Lord Rivers and the Countess of Macclesfield. His strong and violent resentments; his insolence, which too often looked like ingratitude; all his faults, his follies, and his vices, were the consequence of that conviction on his part. It is difficult to note the weakness of the man without feeling a contempt for him; but his character is intelligible only on a supposition of the sincerity of his belief. I have drawn his character to the best of my ability, in the following pages, and as I believe he himself would have portrayed it, for Savage was never careful to conceal his faults. To those who have hinted that I drew from myself, I have nothing to say. Words are wanted upon men who from malice will not, or from ignorance cannot, dissociate the author from his subject. The calumny or the dulness, as the case may be, is old, applied to those who write fiction in the first person.

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Mr. Lemercy receives a hint that he cannot mistake.

London Richard Bentley & Son 1896

RICHARD SAVAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE REPUTED PARENTS OF RICHARD SAVAGE ARE INTRODUCED TO THE READER.

WHENEVER I am seduced into reflection, for I confess I have no turn for it, nothing strikes me more forcibly than the incurable selfishness of mankind, myself of the number. In prison, and likely to remain so;—abandoned by my friends—my enemies (how I scorn and despise them!) exulting, jubilant over my downfall—laying their cool heads together, their cold hearts left at home—and reciting over the finger and thumb all the acts of his life which precipitate the proof that Richard Savage must, of necessity, have come to this at last;—what should Richard Savage do, but, as he does now, snap his unoccupied fingers at the world? bid his enemies and his friends—there is no difference between them—say their worst of him at leisure, and, if they can, do better at speed? and afterwards go to the housetop and pray, if it be only like the Pharisee. I was just upon commending them to a lower place; but they may wait till they are fetched.

Yes, this have I to do. Since the public will no longer have me piecemeal, they shall take me in the lump. If they will not purchase my brains for the future, as I have been accustomed to offer them, by small portions at a time, let them buy the whole carcass. I will write my own history,

and make some of the rogues blush and turn pale, too, and some of the folks stare, who have long ceased to look for alternations of red and white in the leathern visages of the said rogues. And surely, in the life that I have led, or rather, in the life that has misled me, there must be much —more than enough—to be wise, grave, gay, lively, severe, and sad and solemn upon. What I believe of myself, within; what I outwardly know of myself; that will I unfold—neither more nor less. If I shall not spare myself, no one will expect that I shall be merciful to others; and, if I do not find for their actions such excuses and palliations as I make for my own, it will be because I know my own nature better than theirs; and because I am not going to do for them what they can do, and probably will do, nay, very likely *have* done for themselves. And now:—

In the year 1698, and in the purlieus of Chancery Lane, lived an obscure couple who had, at one time, seen better days than fortune appeared disposed to allot to them for the time to come. In fact, Mr. Ambrose Freeman had formerly officiated as butler in the family of a noble lord, in which capacity he acted for several years. Unfortunately, however, a passion for drinking which, it seems, he inherited from his mother, and which he was wont to indulge without reference to time, and without regard to place, wrought a conviction in the mind of his lordship that the services of Ambrose might be dispensed with, seeing that the wine under his care was far too unimpeachable to require so unceasing and rigorous a test as that to which he was accustomed to submit it. When, therefore, he had occasion to wait upon his master for his arrears of wages, with an intimation that if my lord would generously overlook his last inadvertence, he himself should be most happy to discard from his memory the kicking that had ensued upon it, his proposition met with a decided negative; and Ambrose was fain, instigated by a little love and a great deal of vengeance, to prevail upon the cook to ratify the compact that had so long subsisted between them, and to become Mistress Freeman. It was Hobson's choice with the lady—Freeman or no man. She gave him her thumb upon it, and

got his assurance that he would be more circumspect, as to his libations, for the future.

With the conjoint amount of their respective savings, this worthy pair, soon after their marriage, entered upon a small ale-house and geneva-shop in the neighbourhood of Clare-Market, from which—so rumours falsely or with truth gave out—several successive landlords had retired with a decent maintenance for the winter of their days. But Ambrose, having followed the trade three years, during which space he had openly furnished repeated evidence of the potency of his liquors, discovered that the line of lucky vintners was no longer to remain unbroken; and the house, shortly afterwards, being presented to the justices by the Westminster grand jury as an intolerable nuisance, he was compelled to make the best of a bad bargain, and to turn himself to another course of life.

It were tedious—were I able to do so, and I am not—to enumerate the various shifts, most of them discreditable and none highly praiseworthy, to which Freeman was under the necessity of resorting before he settled into a bailiff, a profession which he was destined to practise during the remaining term of his natural life.

In the winter of the year with which I set out, another inmate was added to the two ground-floor rooms tenanted by Freeman and his wife. The new comer was an infant under a twelvemonth old, and for a considerable period after his first appearance caused no common amount of curious speculation to bestir itself amongst the neighbours. In the first place, the child was clad in garments of far finer material and workmanship than were ever worn by children born in the class of life to which the Freemans belonged; in the second place, no one could tell—for nobody had seen—by whom the child was brought, and none knew whence it came; and, lastly, Mrs. Freeman appeared resolutely determined that nobody should know. Ambrose, indeed, when he was not tearfully bewailing his own manifold sins and backslidings, which was almost his constant custom in his cups, was excessively cunning and cautious, although not very consistent in his relation of

matters of fact. Thus, at one time, the child was his nephew, the son of a deceased brother; at another, he was a poor orphan whose father had been an officer killed in the French wars under the Duke of Marlborough, and whose mother was in the mad-house; and sometimes he created a diversion by remarking that a man was not bound to criminate himself, and cried "Hush!" significantly when his wife entered the room.

Thus was I—for I was that child—constituted son to any imaginary beings that might, from time to time, arise upon poor drunken Freeman's brain; now, the son of a soldier, then of a civilian. I have been a slip from the mercantile stock one week, and, the next, have been laid at the door of the clergy; and I devoutly believe, there is not a trade, or profession, or class, or order in the kingdom to which I have not, through Freeman's agency, been indebted for a parent. Ha! ha! he shot near the mark once or twice.

Nature had planted a heart in the bosom of Ambrose Freeman, although, perfectly unaware of its existence, he himself never appealed to it. He felt a becoming respect for wealth and title and for those who possessed them, and indulged a strong and natural contempt for the deadly sin of poverty. He could be as blind as a bat when a pretty fellow slipt a couple of pieces into his hand, and as deaf as a beetle when a broken-down tradesman whispered something into his ear about a large family and the horrors of a prison. Still, I have heard, out of his vocation, when the man's natural tendencies had fair play, it might be seen that he was merely ignorant, and that he would have felt for others, if he had been taught to do so.

Freeman treated me with singular kindness, and conceived for me as strong an affection as he was capable of feeling for any human being. This might happen because he had no children of his own, or because I was not his own child; or, which is most likely, because Mrs. Freeman was in the habit of subjecting me to very barbarous usage. He would take me abroad on Sundays into the Mall, and point out to me the great folks with whom, probably, the course of his profession had made him acquainted. For

several successive years he conveyed me to May Fair, to see the celebrated Lady Mary dance upon the tight rope, and to partake the other amusements of that once delightful resort; and he sometimes introduced me to the convivial companionship of the gentlemen of his own fraternity, whose humour it was to plant me upon the table, and to recommend to me the solace of an occasional whiff and the stimulus of strong beer.

Nevertheless, I did not discover, I imagine, any corresponding amount of friendship for Ambrose. The truth is, Freeman was not satisfied with being kind to me, but would take frequent opportunities when he was drunk, which was nearly every night, of impressing upon me how *very* kind he was; how excessively grateful I ought to be, and what strenuous efforts I was bound in after life to make, that my benefactor's grey hairs should not stick up on end at my ingratitude, but be carefully smoothed down by the hand of filial affection. In addition to this—I have often cursed (for boys *do* curse in their way, and their curses are in effect very like the maledictions of us full-grown sinners)—I have often cursed, I say, the officious and pernicious friendship of the fellow. He frequently fell upon his wife when he discovered that she had been laying hands upon me; the consequence of which was, as I felt to my cost, that I got a more malignant drubbing on the next day, when my protector was from home, and unable, therefore, to interfere in my behalf.

When I was about nine years of age, an event befell in the family, which, to one of the parties, at least, was of no common importance. Freeman was apprised that entertainments of more than ordinary variety were about to take place at Hockley-in-the-Hole. Besides the usual entertainments of cock-fighting, prize-fighting, and bear-baiting, a bull was to be turned loose with fire-works all over him, and a mad ass was to be baited—temptations which Ambrose felt himself under no necessity of endeavouring to resist. During a pause in these refined performances, Freeman, casting his eyes around, descried a person against whom he had in his pocket a writ of long-standing; and he,

accordingly—for even the delights of the bear-garden must give way to business—prepared to serve it upon the unconscious victim. In his endeavour to do so, however, his object got wind; and some unscrupulous enthusiasts in the cause of liberty, who either had reason to hold the class of which Ambrose was a worthy or unworthy member in abhorrence, or who had adopted the common prejudice against the body in general, laid hands upon the specimen before them, and bore him away in triumph to a contiguous pump, where he underwent a cold bath;—no novelty, indeed, but which transcended all former water-works of the same kind, whether in his experience as to himself, or in his remembrance as to others. From the effects of this ill-usage Ambrose never recovered. A cold settled upon his lungs, and fever supervened; and he was carried off—the invariable case!—just at the time he felt he could be least spared, and precisely when he was most unwilling to depart.

I have hinted at Mrs. Freeman's inhumanity towards me. It must be said—but whether it extenuates the barbarity of the woman's conduct, or may be deemed an aggravation of it, is a question hardly worth the decision—that she really did not know who my parents were—whether they were rich or poor, gentle or simple, living or dead. I had been committed to her care by her own brother, one James Ludlow, a man who had been for many years in the service of the Lady Mason; and who had constantly answered, if he did not satisfy his sister's inquiries respecting my birth, by stating that I was under the protection of his mistress; that there were reasons why I should bear, as I had borne, the name of Freeman; and that if his sister was contented to restrain her curiosity till the proper time arrived, she would probably be made as wise in her generation, as to the secret in question, as any other of the children of men. Not one word of all which did Mrs. Freeman believe, she being one of that class of sagacious persons whose incredulity increases in proportion to the amount of information furnished, and who are never so certain of the falsity of a story as when there appears a degree of probability on the face of it.

This brother of hers, Ludlow, had never cultivated an

intimacy with Freeman; on the contrary, an exceeding distaste of each other's company had manifested itself upon all occasions when chance brought them together. Ludlow, although twenty years younger than his brother-in-law, was as precise and formal as the other was irregular and diffuse; and as his predilections seldom led him to the ale-house, and, when they did, never carried him beyond one tankard, Freeman had long since abjured him, protesting that he was a solemn and sober noodle upon whom it was not worth his while to waste his company.

Ludlow, accordingly, several years previously to the death of Freeman, had merely made a quarterly call upon his sister, for the purpose of paying into her hand the sum agreed upon for my *keep* and of defraying the expenses of my school and clothing. When, however, the obstacle of his visits was removed, he came as often as his leisure permitted; and never appeared so happy, or so little miserable (for Ludlow was a very grave person), as when he was silently drawing from his pocket and dispensing those palatable presents, which of all others are the most acceptable to children. It was not long before I became sensible of the kindness of my disinterested benefactor. I could perceive that he had gradually acquired an influence over Mrs. Freeman, which he exerted in my behalf with such success as, in a few months, materially decreased the amount of punishment she had been wont to inflict upon me; and for the purpose of doing away altogether with an odious and troublesome practice which had nothing but custom to recommend it, I entered into a tacit compact with my mother (for so I had been taught to call her), that, in consideration of certain monies to be placed at her disposal, as I from time to time received them from Ludlow, she, on her part, was utterly to relinquish all further right of assault and battery upon my animal structure. Mrs. Freeman was not unwilling to fall into this arrangement; for, by the time I had attained my tenth year, I not only would not submit passively to her correction, but resisted lustily both with hands and feet; and whenever these combats took place, might more properly be said to be over-matched than conquered.

One day, Ludlow made his appearance with a very uncommon cheerfulness of aspect. His sister remarked it.

"I don't know," said he, "whether you will be pleased by what I am about to tell you; but, I believe, you are soon to lose little Richard."

Mrs. Freeman first held up her hands, and then darted a long finger towards me.

"And what, in mercy's name, are you going to do with the boy, now?"

"He is to be sent to St. Albans to school."

"St. Albans!" cried Mrs. Freeman, "where's that? As though he didn't get plenty of learning from Old Staines!" And she pushed me, her erudite charge, out of the way. "He's too much for me, with his books and his writing, already. I've no notion of teaching boys so much."

"But somebody else has," said Ludlow dryly, "and Lady Mason wishes to see him to-morrow morning, and desires that you will accompany him."

"And this is to be the end of all my care and pains," complained Mrs. Freeman, "after all I've done for him. I'm sure I've been more like a mother to him than anything else. Ha! you may grin, you graceless young villain" —and she held forth her menacing fist—"I've only been too good to you!"

"Well," said Ludlow, handing her a written direction, "don't be later than eleven."

"Her ladyship might come to me, I think," muttered Mrs. Freeman, placing the paper in a broken tea-cup on the mantelpiece, and then, turning suddenly short round: "I'll tell you what, James; I shall make so bold as to ask her ladyship who are the child's parents. I won't let him go without knowing—no, indeed."

"It will do you no good, that," returned Ludlow hastily, "but much harm. If you ask any questions of the kind, Martha, Lady Mason, I know, will be greatly offended, and will do nothing for you. She *does* intend to give you something very handsome for your care of Richard."

Mrs. Freeman pulled out the sleeves of her gown, and twitching at the bosom of it, took a seat.

"Why," she said, "James Ludlow, you know I love the boy as my own, and——"

"And one day, perhaps, will be told to whom he belongs," interrupted her brother.

"Ah! one day! a day I shall never see, I doubt," said Mrs. Freeman, with a forced sigh. "Come hither, Dick."

I approached. She tenderly took my head between her two hands, and leaning back in her chair, gazed at me, her head fondly jerked on one side. That done, she advanced her shaking visage towards me till her nose touched mine, and saluted me in a sort of rapture. "Bless you, my Dick, must I part with you?" and a stare and a gulp followed.

I had too much cause to doubt the sincerity of Mrs. Freeman's affection, to be at all moved by this unwonted exhibition. Not so, Ludlow, who, watery-eyed fellow! was deeply affected, and who, wringing his sister's hand, assured her that I was going where I would be well taken care of, and where I should be made a bright man; and that hereafter she would see reason to be proud of me.

On the next morning, the woman and I—she arrayed in her best available apparel, and I combed out and soaped, till my face was as stiff and shiny as a vizard-mask, held our important way towards the court-end of the town, and in due time found ourselves at the door of Lady Mason. We were received by Ludlow, who ushered us in silence up a broad flight of stairs, and thence into a magnificent apartment, telling us to wait there till he apprised his mistress of our arrival. Mrs. Freeman was not a little daunted by the splendour of the place, and though ready to drop, as she said (and so was I), would not permit either herself or me to occupy one of those, "Lawk ha mercy! what heavenly chairs!"

"What heaps of chany, Dick!" she said, gazing wonderingly around. "I wonder where it all comes from? Tables covered with it—two buffets full of it, mantelpiece crowded with it! Goggles, Dick!" (a favourite word of hers, "goggles,") "I wonder what they call those two green animals, one in each corner, holding up their heads, with their mouths open, and their eyes shut, to see what

God will send 'em, I suppose. A poor chance, I doubt, ugly beasts! Well, it's good of 'em, if they have such ill-favoured creatures in foreign parts, only to send their likenesses here. Hush! here she comes, I think."

The door opened, and a lady of venerable aspect entered the room, partly supported by a stick, and leaning on Ludlow's arm. He carefully led her to her seat, and declining his head, appeared to receive her commands.

"You may bring him to me now," I heard her say.

Ludlow took me by the hand. His own trembled as he whispered, "Come to Lady Mason, my dear; she wishes to see you," and he placed me by the arm of her chair.

"Good heavens! how like—how very like, Mr. Ludlow! do you not perceive?" she exclaimed, shrinking, as it were, from me.

Ludlow with glistening eyes, and bowing silently, assented.

"Oh, my sweet fellow, my poor dear child!" resumed her ladyship, "what a fate is yours!—and mine," she added, somewhat wildly, smoothing my hair back from my forehead, and gazing upon me intently. Tears presently gushed from her eyes; she clasped me fervently to her bosom; and her head sinking upon my small shoulder, she sobbed aloud.

This was so different a scene from any to which I had been accustomed, that my heart was melted. I lifted up my voice, and would have blubbered in right earnest, but was checked by the upraised fist of Mrs. Freeman, who with hideous but intelligible grimaces commanded me to desist.

Lady Mason, after some time, recovered her calmness, and wiped away my tears with her handkerchief. "My love is a very good boy, is he not? I know he is," she said with a faint smile.

My reply was such as may be expected;—I answered that I was.

"Our Richard *is* a very good boy?" inquired her ladyship, addressing Mrs. Freeman, who, thus appealed to, came forward with many bobs and curtseys.

"Why, your good ladyship," replied Mrs. Freeman, mincingly, "I can't but say he is in general a very good young gentleman, but——"

Richard Savage at Lady Mason's

London Richard Bentley & Son 1896

"But what?" said her ladyship.

"Why, ma'am, Master Richard is such a spirit—so passionate-like, and won't bear control."

Lady Mason directed a glance at Ludlow, and shook her head, with a slight shrug. "But he is going to school," she said, turning to me, "where he will learn how wicked it is to give way to his passions. He will be taught better there; for he is to be a gentleman, one of these days."

"Do you hear that, Master Richard?" cried Mrs. Freeman. "I'm sure you ought to go down on your knees for such a goodness. Make your best bow to her ladyship."

I did so, and was withdrawn by Ludlow to the other end of the room. A long conversation ensued between Lady Mason and Mrs. Freeman, during which my ears detected the chinking of gold. When it broke up, the face of "my mother" shone luminously; and she came towards me and embraced me with an affectionate fervour, which I not only did not return, but tried my utmost to avoid.

When Ludlow led me towards his lady for the purpose of taking leave, she almost stifled me with kisses, made me promise that I would be the best and cleverest boy in the world, repeated her assurance that I was one day to be a gentleman, and placed in my hand a guinea, with an injunction against spending too much of it at once. We were then taken down to Ludlow's private room, where refreshment was provided for us; and where Mrs. Freeman once more pressed her brother very hard for an explanation touching the mystery of my birth, but without success.

"Goggles, lad!" said she, squeezing my ear, "you're somebody, at all events—I see that plain enough; and may at last come to be the owner of this fine house, and all it contains; and there's plenty of one thing and another, I doubt."

I had my own thoughts upon the subject; and looked, I believe, at Ludlow, as though I had. He was slightly disconcerted.

"You heard what Lady Mason told Richard," he said, addressing his sister. "I can say no more."

"You can, if you will," retorted Mrs. Freeman.

"I won't then."

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Freeman, rising, "obstinate as a pig."

"You will remember," said Ludlow, "that you are not to inform your neighbours where Richard is gone. *That* you faithfully promised her ladyship, you know; and on that depends——"

"I can keep a secret, I hope," exclaimed Mrs. Freeman, hastily. "When any thing is to be kept secret, I'm above letting it be known."

"Obstinate as a pig, *then*, I suppose," returned Ludlow.

"You have me there," said his sister, with a sportive slap on the shoulder. "Well, her ladyship is very much of the lady, I must say that of her, and has done what's handsome by me. Come along, Dick, you're very like somebody, it seems; a pity any one should be like you; and there's a secret for *you*."

Lady Mason's guinea was too fresh in my pocket to suffer me to take offence at any ill-conditioned jests at my expense. I contented myself, therefore, by making a wide-mouthed grin, as she turned her back, and by a farcical imitation of her gait and gesture, as she proceeded through the hall.

Ludlow accompanied us home in a coach, and in the afternoon took me to several shops, where such articles of clothing were ordered as were necessary to my genteel appearance at school; and it was arranged that on the following Wednesday he was to call for me, for the purpose of escorting me to St. Albans.

CHAPTER II.

RICHARD SAVAGE AT SCHOOL.

Ludlow made his appearance punctually on the morning appointed for my departure, and tenderly released me from the affectionate gripe of Mrs. Freeman, who, now that I was about to leave her for ever, discovered agreeable qualities and social virtues in me, of which neither herself nor her charge had heretofore been conscious. We left her in tears, genuine or spurious, I know not; and making the best of

our way to the inn, took our seats in the coach, and were in due time conveyed to the place of our destination.

Ludlow ordered dinner at the Nag's Head, at which we had been set down, and a pint of burnt sherry for immediate consumption, and led the way to the coffee-room. And here, having first explained that the two fat elderly maiden ladies in the coach—sisters he supposed—had so "gallowed" his brains with their incessant tattle, that he hardly knew what he ought to say, or how he ought to say it, the worthy creature earnestly and with tears in his eyes bestowed upon me an unaccustomed quantity of very good advice, which I gratefully received, and which, I am sorry to confess, went hand in hand with my very good intentions to the place appointed, time out of mind, for the reception of those moral superfluities.

Dinner being ended, and the afternoon drawing on apace, Ludlow went forth and secured the services of a round-faced rustic, upon whose impregnable skull my trunk was placed, and under whose guidance we found ourselves, in a short time, at the door of Mr. Burridge.

The pedagogue was at home and at leisure, for it was half-holyday—and sent word out that we were to be admitted to his presence. When we entered the apartment, we beheld a gigantic figure reclined almost horizontally in a very large chair. He was smoking a pipe, and had, it would seem, recently divested himself of an enormous rusty periwig, which lay clutched in his huge fist upon the table. He regarded us in silence for some moments, through the smoky veil by which he was surrounded, and then rising leisurely, he laid aside his pipe and came towards us.

"This letter, sir," said Ludlow, "will explain for what purpose I wait upon you," handing it to him.

"A letter—eh!" said Burridge, whipping a pair of spectacles out of his waistcoat pocket, and jerking them on the bridge of his nose.

"Let's see—Francis Burridge, Esquire—Esquire!" and he gave a loud whistle. "Ah! well—very good—just so!" he added, at intervals, as he hastily perused the letter.

"This tells me," said he, holding the letter from him, "that I am to take this little fellow—what's his name? Richard Freeman, under my care—under my tuition."

"Yes, sir," said Ludlow.

"And that he is to remain with me during the holydays?"

Ludlow bowed.

"That implies that the lad's parents are dead; is it so?"

"I believe they are," replied Ludlow, hesitating.

"Ah! not certain?" said Burridge; "perhaps there's more life than death in the matter, eh?"

"I really do not know," replied Ludlow, disconcerted.

"Ah! well!" returned Burridge—"who is Henrietta Mason?"

"My lady," replied Ludlow, "the Lady Mason."

"The Lady Mason!—oh! I beg her pardon," cried Burridge with a low bow, "that's it; I always bow to a title." He rang the bell. "Bring some wine," as the servant entered.

Ludlow began to plead headache, but was stopped by the familiar hand of Burridge upon his mouth.

"Now, sir," said he, when the wine was put on the table, "I crave pardon—your name?"

"Ludlow, sir."

"Well, Mr. Ludlow," and he slapped his brawny leg, "let us drink to the speedy progress of our young student; and we'll give him a glass too, to damp him down, as printers do their paper, before he goes into the press. Let us hope he'll contain something good when he comes out of it."

"I hope so, indeed," said Ludlow, earnestly, setting down his glass. "Will you forgive me?" he resumed after a pause; "but I trust—I feel no doubt—indeed, I know that he will be treated kindly. I am, sir," and poor Ludlow smiled with a kind of mournful humility, "I am greatly attached to him."

Mr. Burridge raised his black brows, and gazed into the meek countenance of the other. "Ah! well—you like him," he remarked, at length. "Why, yes, we shall treat him kindly enough, I dare say. We keep a school, Ludlow, not a slaughter-house;—we are not cannibals, but Christians;

men, not monsters. But, sir," and here he shook his finger in the air, "Mr. Shakspeare, an author strangely neglected in these our times, albeit the greatest genius that ever appeared in England, except Milton, and in all, save sublimity, he surpasses even that stupendous genius—Mr. Shakspeare has proposed this question—'Treat a man according to his deserts, and who shall escape whipping?' Now, sir, if that be true, and I believe it is," winking his eye knowingly, and pointing with his thumb over to me, "d'ye think the boys ought to go scot free, eh?"

"No, indeed," said Ludlow. "Do you hear what Mr. Burridge says, Richard? You must take care."

"So he will," cried Burridge, putting on his periwig. "The truth is, the temples of Greece and Rome are 'bosom'd high in tufted trees;'—birch trees, Mr. Ludlow; and I never knew a boy yet who could find his way to those temples without going through those trees. But come, Dick, take leave of your friend; he is anxious to go."

So saying, Mr. Burridge hummed the end of an old song, which I afterwards discovered was the only one ever committed to memory by that gentleman, and taking a turn or two, left the room.

"Not anxious to go, dear Richard," said Ludlow, slipping half-a-guinea into my hand, and kissing my forehead; "but if I stayed longer, I should not reach London to-night. God bless you! Remember me kindly, will you? It shall not be long before I see you again."

My heart was heavy when my only friend left me; and when I heard the street door fairly close upon him, I began to weep. Burridge surprised me in this dismal plight.

"What! whimpering?" said he. "Cease wailing and gnashing, my young Heraclitus; we shall soon be very good friends, I dare say. Here, take heart, and another glass of wine, and leave crying to girls who have knocked their dolls' heads off, and can't put them on again. There! a laugh becomes you much better. Now, what do you say, my man?" and, my head between his hands, he lifted me on to a chair. "Who has been giving you the rudiments —where have you been to school?"

"With Old Staines," said I.

"Old Staines! ah! well—let's see what hue your mind has acquired from Old Staines."

Here he put a variety of questions to me, touching my advancement in English grammar, my answers to which were clearly far from satisfactory; for he knitted his brows and shook his head in token of disapproval, and with a protruded lip stood for a while in meditation.

"Ah! well—*well?* No—ill," he said, at length, "very ill—very ill, indeed. What was the name?" he continued, suddenly turning to me, "of the Bœotian, eh? the blundering bumpkin—the brute who taught you all he knew, and couldn't help it, eh?"

"Old Staines," I repeated.

"Old Staines!" echoed Burridge, throwing up his arms. "Dicky Freeman, such old stains—old blots, rather—ought to be expunged from creation. But, come with me; we'll begin to-morrow to rub out those old stains."

So saying, he swung me with one arm from the chair in a volant circle, and taking my hand in his, led me into the school room.

"Metcalfe," said he, addressing a dingy old fellow, begrimed with snuff from nose to knees, who was seated at a desk mending pens. "Call the boys out of the playground. Bid them come hither—all of them—instantly."

Metcalfe passed his hands along his shiny galligaskins, and then flapped his paunch vigorously, causing a cloud of dust to fly out of his waistcoat, and rising with a grunt, made leisurely for a door at the other end of the room.

"Stand you here, Freeman," said Burridge, planting me at the foot of an elevated desk, which he ascended.

Presently, in straggled a number of boys of various sizes, ages, and appearance, who, catching the master's eye, as he stood towering before them, ranged themselves in something like order and awaited his speech, which, prefaced by a terrific monitory smiting on the desk with a large wooden ruler, ran in pretty nearly these words:—

"Young gentlemen; ah! well! young gentlemen, for so you are, or rather, for so I mean to make you—behold

this young fellow-student whom I here present to you. He is strange, and shy, and, no doubt, not a little disconcerted at present; be it yours to console, to enliven, to encourage him. Cheer him, my brave fellows, cheer him, my good lads. Be at once the rule and the example of good manners. He's but a little lad, you see—make much of him. (Pshaw! *little*—make *much*—very poor that!) In short, since I constantly inculcate kindness, humanity and politeness, do show, though it be for the first time, that I have not laboured in vain."

This address being brought to a conclusion, Mr. Burridge descended from his desk. "Go amongst them, Dick," said he, with a singularly sweet and benevolent smile, patting me on the head,—"and make as many friends as you can. Metcalfe, I want you. Follow me to my study," and he stalked away; the dingy usher, having gone through the same manual operations as before, following at a humble distance.

Burridge's speech, delivered, as it had been, in the most persuasive manner a remarkably sonorous voice could adopt, encouraged me greatly. I advanced, therefore, into the middle of the room, and proceeded to scan the countenances of my school-fellows with a view of striking up a friendship with one or more of them. I had not stood long thus, however, when a pull of my hair, from behind, caused me to start round with indignant surprise. My eyes lighted upon a row of faces of singular gravity, with a hand over each mouth as of philosophical speculation. As I turned scowling from these grave Muftis, hopeless of detecting the delinquent, a second visitation of the same nature awakened my fury, and turning short upon my heel, with a rapid swing of my arm, I prostrated a small wretch, upon whose upturned visage still lingered a slight vestige of mischievous glee which was instantaneously succeeded by a look of woe. The lamentations of this victim opened the throats of the smaller fry. "He won't fight."—"He daren't fight."—"What's his name?" resounded on all sides.

"I say, you sir," cried a boy older and taller than myself, strutting briskly up to me, "what's your name?"

"Go it, Sinclair—that's it, Sinclair," shouted the ingenuous youths.

(Boys *are* the generous, noble, high-minded beings their grandmothers inspire philosophers to call them.)

"What's your name, I tell you?" repeated Sinclair.

"Richard Freeman," said I, sturdily.

"Well, have you a mind to fight?"

"Any one of my own size," I answered; "and I should like to catch the coward that pulled my hair just now."

Although I said this readily and resolutely enough, a sense of my unfriended condition lay heavy at my heart, and mingled grief and rage arose into my throat. I would have averted my head to conceal the tears that sprang to my eyes; but at this moment a tap on the shoulder engaged my attention. I looked up, and saw a boy about Sinclair's age. He kindly took me by the hand.

"I'm Gregory—Tom Gregory," said he; "never mind them—I'll stand by you!"

In the meanwhile, Sinclair had been taking counsel with his companions.

"I'll see what he's made of," he observed as he broke from them, sagaciously nodding his head. Thereupon the young gentleman, in a kind of dance, receded a few paces, and, with his tongue between his teeth, and one eye cocked as though to enable him to take a surer aim, he advanced towards me in the same lively manner, and struck me across the face with his open hand.

Two boys, with very good intentions, instantly seized me by the arms.

"You are no match for him;—don't fight him," said they.

But, had he been the devil's own imp, I had flown upon him for that. Bursting from their hold, I rushed headlong upon my assailant, and dealt him such a blow upon the under jaw as, had he not withdrawn his insolent tongue, might, perhaps, have abridged it. As it was, he recoiled, with an expression of face almost pitiable.

"Enough," said Tom Gregory, interposing; "well done, Freeman. Sinclair, you are a coward to strike a boy younger than yourself."

The first day at School.

London. Richard Bentley & Son 1896

"I'll fight him," said I, going up to him. I remembered to have taken down such an ignoble swaggerer once before, who had interfered with my amusements in Lincoln's Inn Fields. "Have you a mind to fight?" repeating his words.

"Yes, I have," he replied.

No more. Two detachments of lads seized upon us severally, and hurried us into the playground, behind a large elm-tree, and set face to face, we began to bruise each other without ceremony.

Sinclair proved himself to be no coward, or perhaps, shame did the work of courage; but he was utterly ignorant of the noble science to which the renowned Mr. Broughton, before I left London, lent such additional lustre. He lacked also my activity and quickness of manual retort; so that, after a prolonged combat, in which many blows were exchanged, three black eyes were given, and much blood was shed, he gave in, and reluctantly proclaimed me the conqueror.

When the battle was ended, we removed from under the elm-tree to a more open space, and our adherents bestirred themselves in fetching water from an adjoining pump to clear our disfigured faces, and ascertain the real amount of our respective injuries. While we were thus engaged, forming a mute but busy circle, a darkness suddenly, and for a moment, "overcame us like a summer cloud," and something, expanding as it descended, fell in the midst of us. It was the master's rusty periwig! A number of eyes were instantly cast upward towards a well-known window at the back of the house, at which the prodigious visage of Burridge was disclosed with a cruel calmness upon it, brimful of a coming tempest. The major portion of boys forthwith dispersed themselves in all directions, assuming, as they went their ways, various airs of indifference, as though the matter in hand had only just before engaged their passing attention. The chief accessaries, however, stood fixed—spell-bound.

"You," cried Burridge, addressing Gregory, who had constituted himself my second, "you take up that," pointing to the portentous mass of hair, "and with Dixon,

Sinclair, and Freeman, come instantly to my room." This said, the face was withdrawn.

"Don't be afraid, Freeman," said Gregory, who had a spice of the wag in his composition, lifting the wig from the ground, and placing it on his own head; "we're in the right, at all events. Come along;" and away we went, Sinclair and Dixon crawling ruefully behind.

Burridge looked plaguy gloomy as we came into his presence—his elbow on the arm of his chair, his cheek upon his hand, and his legs apart, stretched out to their full length.

"Ah! well! these are doings—not pretty, but ugly doings," said he. "Tell me, you, Gregory, how this face-mauling fell out."

Hereat, Gregory furnished a plain and succinct account of the whole transaction.

"And why did you permit this great lad to fight this little one?" demanded Burridge, when the other had concluded.

"Because, I hoped he would thrash him, and thought he could," answered Gregory, "and because if he hadn't, I would have done it for him."

The master pressed his lips together with his fingers. "Leave the room, sir," he exclaimed in a stern voice; "I will speak to you another time."

"And you," he continued, turning to Dixon, "you go after him; but slowly, and as much like a hound as you can. You'll improve at it, in time. I shall *not* speak to you again. Speak to yourself: ask yourself which of the two is the greater poltroon, you or Sinclair;" and taking him by the ear, he guided him to the door.

"As for you, Sinclair, what pains have you taken for a sound thrashing! If Freeman hadn't given you a cuffing, Gregory would; or, if Gregory hadn't I should: you went upon three chances, and the first proved a certainty. Sneak hence; and when you can bear to look at your own face, perhaps you may be able to look into Freeman's; and then I hope you will beg his pardon. Go away—go away."

Sinclair departed, muttering a sentence, of which "I won't, *I* know," was all that reached my ear.

"But, what is this?" cried Burridge with an awfully severe look—"you are a fighter, are you, Mister Richard Freeman?—a Dares, a mauler; an Entellus, a bruiser, eh?"

"I wouldn't have fought, sir," I replied, "only he struck me first."

"Struck you first!" exclaimed Burridge, in a terrible tone.

"Yes, sir," said I, nothing daunted; "and wasn't I right? Wouldn't you have done the same, sir, if it had been you?"

Burridge walked to the window. "Yes, by G—, yes, I believe I should," he said between his teeth. "I rather think I should." He turned quickly round. "Bless your black eye and your swollen nose," he cried, "you are a fellow of fire, Dick. That spirit of yours will either make or mar you. Go along to the school room. You have laid the foundation of a lasting peace there, Dick."

And so I found I had. Thenceforth it was tolerably smooth water with me, ruffled at intervals by Sinclair, who could wrangle, and was an adept in the art of half applicable bluster, and who maintained a servile crew of backers; but he never hazarded an open quarrel. Perfectly conscious of the advantage I had gained, I was at no pains to conceal my contempt and defiance of him; and upon all occasions bore myself as one who desired nothing better than an opportunity of repeating the chastisement I had inflicted upon him. In the meanwhile, I made rapid progress in my studies, and secured the esteem and affection of Burridge, who descanted upon my qualifications to Ludlow, when he came to see me, which was usually once a quarter, with an earnestness and a warmth that made the tears trickle down the poor fellow's face.

Mrs. Freeman had died about two years after my establishment at St. Albans. This calamity (as I heard it was) to her, was but small grief to me. I had never loved, or even liked the woman. She had from my infancy impressed upon my mind the fact that she was no mother of mine; and her conduct towards me had rendered that impression indelible. She had never treated me like a

mother. What have I written? She had never treated me like *a* mother! Let it stand; although it is not altogether true. I proceed:—

As I grew older, it was not unusual with me, in my leisure hours, to ponder over my future probable destination; but the one difficulty presented itself at the outset, and brought to nothing every conclusion at which I sought to arrive. "Who am I?" was the constant question I proposed to myself, and the frequent inquiry I made of Ludlow, who commonly shook my hand and his own head in silence; or put me off with some vague answer which increased, while it baffled, my curiosity.

I had been four years under the tutelage of Burridge, when, one day, Ludlow made his appearance before him, with a mournful seriousness of aspect. I was called into the room.

"Come hither, Dick," said Burridge, beckoning me towards them—"here's your friend—friend? Ah well! no matter—here's Ludlow come to take you away from me."

"At Lady Mason's command," interposed Ludlow, "but much against my will—had I a right to express it."

"Humph!" grunted Burridge. "Why, sir, I haven't half done with him yet. I want to introduce him to a few Greek gentlemen of my acquaintance, very reserved people, who require much respect and attention before one can become acquainted with them. I don't think I'll let him go. Look you, Ludlow; I designed him for Cambridge, by way of compensation for a certain blockhead they were troubled with some five and twenty years since. I'll tell you what; I'll lend him—mark, I'll lend him to Lady Mason for one month; if at the expiration of that period he be not forthcoming, look to it; or rather, look for me: to London up come I, trundling; whip him under my arm, and away with him, to be heard of once again"—here Burridge nodded his head significantly—"when his father appears to claim him."

Ludlow was greatly distressed. "I am sure, Lady Mason," stammering, "the friendly interest you take in Richard's welfare—the uncommon—a—a—the—but I *must* obey my

orders." This last he brought out hastily, but with an effort.

"Ah well," returned Burridge, "*must*, ugly word; I never liked it. 'Can't' and 'must' are the two devils that claw out the eyes of 'will.' Sir," he continued in his natural tone, "you are, I doubt not, a very honest, good little man; but you *are* a little man. Now, what business has a little man like you to be lugging about a great secret which, I see, is a vast deal too heavy for you?"

"A great secret, sir!" faltered Ludlow.

"Yes, sir, a great secret that has outgrown its clothes, and soon won't have a rag to cover it. I was one of the close gentlemen myself, once; and I brought myself to a fine pass with my closeness. Thus it was: I married a young and pretty woman without a farthing; and I kept the marriage secret; but I was found out, nevertheless. Then my father disinherited me; that, also, I strove to keep *particularly* secret; but it got wind and blew all over the town. Then my creditors hunted me in and out, and out and in to all manner of lodgings, where I designed to be *very* secret. Next, my wife, poor dear! died of a broken heart—having kept that, all along, a *profound* secret. Then I fell into extreme poverty, and all my friends left me; but that is *no* secret. Never to confide, or to harbour secrets —*that* is a secret worth knowing."

"That is very true, sir," returned Ludlow, "but servants are not free agents. They are *not*, Mr. Burridge," he repeated, almost vehemently, observing that the other shook his head.

"Ah! well—a pity!" said Burridge.

"Let me entreat," cried Ludlow, "as well for the sake of Lady Mason as of Richard, that you will take no steps at present to discover what it is so necessary should remain concealed. Why do I ask this? not for myself, but for his sake, first; for Lady Mason's, second; for my own, last."

"Glibly spoken," remarked Burridge; "what say you, Richard—Freeman?"

I answered, that I had the fullest confidence in Ludlow, that I was assured he meant all for the best; and I sug-

gested that, very likely, Lady Mason had recalled me so abruptly, for the purpose of disclosing all she knew of my birth. I added, plainly enough, that I had a right to demand this piece of justice at her hands, and that, if necessary, I should do so.

This speech had a sensible effect upon Ludlow. He was embarrassed.

"It is but for a time," he said. "*I*, at least, design that all shall one day be explained."

"Enough of this perversion of the gift of speech; a truce to this mysterious mouth-work!" exclaimed Burridge. "This boy will prove an Œdipus for your Sphynx, I doubt not. Should you require my assistance, Dick, you know where to find me. I leave you to him, sir, for the present," turning to Ludlow, "and, indeed, it is no business, although I make it a concern of mine. Go and take leave of your friends—and of your enemies—for I suspect you have acquired both in this our microcosm."

Of Tom Gregory, between whom and myself an entire friendship had existed from the first hour of our acquaintance, I took an affectionate leave; and bade a cordial farewell to some others, who might more properly be termed partisans than friends. Finally, I frankly offered my hand to Sinclair, assuring him—which was really the truth—that I bore him no ill-will; and declaring that, since we should, perhaps, never meet again, it would gratify me to remember that we had parted on good terms. The awkward cub sullenly rejected my advances; determined, as it would seem, that I should retain to the last my advantage over him. I have reason to believe that he never forgot the contemptuous smile which his brutal folly called to my lip.

"Here, Dick," exclaimed Burridge, as I re-entered his study. "Ludlow and luggage are waiting for you. Let me see; you are now upon fifteen years of age; four years have you and I been very good friends. Four times forty—one hundred and sixty. Surely, I can spare you two out of one hundred and sixty guineas. Buy a Horace, Dick, with one of them. Horace! so easily construed—so difficult to translate! And mark; don't listen to what the fools

tell you about Sallust; his style *is* a fine one. And never believe that Virgil was so much greater than Ovid. Nosey had as much poetry in him as the Mantuan. And always think for yourself—and *do* think, and think of me sometimes. And—there, go."

I kissed the good man's hand reverently, and gratefully expressed my obligations for his care, his kindness, and his affection.

"Pish!" said he, looking up to the ceiling. "Away with him, Ludlow. Dick, you take with you the last corner of my heart. You have a right to it, you dog! You found it when I thought I had none left. I shall see you when I come to London during the holydays."

He shook Ludlow warmly by the hand. "My honest friend, let this boy be fairly treated—fairly—openly. What the deuce! Who is his coxcomb of a father?"

"He will be treated well, sir," said Ludlow.

Burridge pointed to his heart.

"Upon my honour, all will be done for the best—all *is* for the best."

"Then I believe you," returned Burridge. "Here, thou man of strength," to the porter in the hall, "shoulder your burden. A heavy trunk, and a light heart, Richard, are good travelling companions."

And away we went to the Nag's Head, Ludlow all sadness and silence, I all curiosity and impatience.

CHAPTER III.

RICHARD SAVAGE, AFTER MUCH ADO, SUFFERS HIMSELF TO BE PUT TO AN ART AND MYSTERY; BUT DOES NOT REMAIN LONG ENOUGH TO MAKE HIMSELF MASTER OF HIS CALLING.

When we reached Tyburn turnpike, Ludlow proposed that we should get out of the coach; and telling the driver that my trunk was to remain at the inn till called for, he motioned me to take his arm, and we proceeded towards the house of Lady Mason. He had been more than usually

taciturn during our journey—a circumstance which I attributed to the presence of other passengers; but now that we were released, I took it for granted that he would open to me without reserve, the cause of my abrupt removal from school. No. He would tell me, he said, when we reached home.

"Home?" said I, "and is Lady Mason's house to be my future home?"

"Oh no; it is a manner of speaking," he replied—"I meant after we had got there."

We pursued our way in silence for many minutes.

"Look at that house," he said, at length, "it is the residence of Earl Rivers."

"Indeed! it is a very noble mansion."

"It *was*, I should rather say, his residence; for he is dead—lately dead."

I had no reply to make. Be it so. I had never heard, nor had I the slightest desire to hear, of his lordship. At present, I was solicitous about the living, not the dead.

When we were got "home," Ludlow conducted me to his own room, where he left me for more than an hour. He returned, apparently more crestfallen than before, bringing with him a servant, who began to set forth the table for dinner. I viewed these preparations in silence, inwardly resolved to await with patience any communication he might be pleased to make. It was not till long after the cloth was withdrawn, that Ludlow opened his lips for a vocal purpose; and when he did, it was somewhat tremulously. At length, he said,—

"You are very anxious, Richard, to know the reason of your sudden removal from school: *that* I am forbidden to tell. It will be enough to say—" he paused. "You were going to say something, Richard?"

"No, indeed, sir, I was not."

"Do not call me 'sir,' Dick," said Ludlow, reproachfully. "It will, *perhaps*, be enough to say that a very unlooked for change of affairs—affairs affecting you very nearly—has made it absolutely necessary that you should no longer continue at St. Albans."

"I had concluded as much," answered I; "but I want to know—and I think it only reasonable I should be satisfied—what this unlooked for change may be."

"I am sure you will not think that I shall answer that inquiry," returned Ludlow, as though he wished to carry the matter with a high hand. "I have already informed you that I am forbidden to tell you."

"Come, come, Mr. Ludlow," said I in a heat, "I am no longer to be put off."

"Put off, Richard?"

"Put off, sir—I am no longer a boy," swelling as I spoke, in all the dignity of fifteen; "and what *you* are forbidden to disclose, I, methinks, should be permitted to know."

"You ought to know this," said Ludlow, after a pause, during which he had been gazing at me with alarmed astonishment, "that I have been ever studious of your interest and happiness. My kindness to you during so many years—have I not been always kind to you?"

"Past kindness to cover present cruelty, perhaps," I retorted, not a whit melted by this appeal: "but I see I cannot hope to learn any thing from you. I shall apply, therefore, to Lady Mason." As I said this I moved towards the door.

"O—h!" exclaimed Ludlow, with a long-drawn sigh, as of agony, taking my arm. "Sit down, Richard, and hear me. Lady Mason must not be intruded upon. Recent events have so flurried her spirits, that she is very ill. She is unable to see you."

"She cannot be more unable to see me," I replied, "than I am unable to see the drift of this mystery. But tell me, what do you propose to do with me? Whither will you take me? Where am I to go?"

Another "O—h!" as long as before, and a wretched shake of the head.

"If you knew all," said he, "you would pity us; and me more than my lady. And one day you *shall* know all," he continued hurriedly, rising and holding up his fist, "and we'll, eh? we'll one day do great things."

"Great things, I dare say," said I, laughing, for Ludlow

had talked in this strain before. "But what are we to do now?"

"That's it—that's it," said Ludlow; "at present—only for the present, mind: Lady Mason wishes, but it is not my wish—that you should be put to a business, upon liking, as they call it, for a short time: we have applied to a person who will take you. He will be very kind to you, Dick; he shall be. I'll take care of that."

"My education, such as it has been," said I, "has not prepared me for business. But what is it?"

"You are to—now do look upon it in the proper light—it is all for the best—indeed it is—you are to be put apprentice," Ludlow blushed as he spoke it, "to—a shoemaker."

Ludlow's blush was nothing, I suspect, to the deep suffusion that overspread *my* countenance. I felt my cheeks burn with it.

"A shoemaker!" I ejaculated, at length—"what! a shoemaker, a cobbler—a botcher of boots and shoes!—a fellow in a leathern apron perpetually pulling two strings through a piece of leather—Ha! ha! ha!"

The prolongation of my laugh, which I believe was hysterical, alarmed Ludlow not a little.

"For Heaven's sake, Richard, stop that laugh—you frighten me—indeed you do," cried he, following me about the room as I paced up and down. I recovered myself after awhile, and turned upon him to vent my contempt and disgust, which were well-nigh choking me. There was a meek piteousness in his face that disarmed my anger. I was moved by it.

"Tell me," said I, after a minute's thought, "is it *necessary* I should be thrust into this shoe-hole, or some as abject place?"

"Oh! it is—it is," exclaimed Ludlow.

"Enough: I will go there for a time; just long enough to mark my obedience. Treat me as they will, or as they please, they shall find that one day a dear account must be rendered to me."

"You consent, then?" said he.

"I do. When is my disgrace to commence?"

"Don't call it so," replied Ludlow. "No situation in life can——"

"Oh! I know all that, my dear friend," said I; "it is, as Mr. Burridge often said, the sop to Cerberus. But I was wrong; it is *their* disgrace, not mine."

"You will stay till to-morrow, of course?" he inquired. The question implied, as I thought, a desire that I should not.

"Why? what is this place to me?" said I. "At once, and once more, I am at your disposal: next time, I shall be at my own."

Ludlow would have folded me in his arms. He was delighted at my acquiescence; but he looked grieved, too.

"No, no," he said; "to-morrow morning will be early enough. It would be too bad, if you might not rest one night under this roof."

I have observed during my life that a proud, if it be at the same time a generous, nature is, in many cases, an instrument more easily played upon by the crafty and the designing than are the mean, the abject, and the subservient. Now, I had no reason to think that there was any kind intention towards me in banishing me to a cobbler's stall; nor did I believe that any necessity existed for the disposal of me in so contemptuous a manner. My pride, however, seconded the views of those who had it in hand, as I believed, to persecute me. I was resolved upon showing them that, do what they would with me, they should not break my spirit, or compel me to relax my claim. I had Ludlow sure—I was certain of that. Every successive occasion upon which I had seen him confirmed my influence over him. I could see that he had no strength of mind, or stability of purpose. That *he* was in no wise connected with me, he had often told me; that Lady Mason had no right to exercise a direct control over me I had also gathered from him.

On the next morning, Ludlow had me once more under his guidance, and telling me that Holborn was our destination, we set out. My companion endeavoured to cheer me, as we walked along, by ringing the changes upon his "all

for the best" philosophy; but I had long since grown weary of that senseless chime, and I told him so.

"Fulfil your orders," said I, sullenly; "take me to my den, and leave me."

Ludlow sighed and hemmed, and scrubbing his chin, said no more. At length, he stopped, and retreating from the pathway surveyed a house, and then looked towards me, as if to ascertain how I liked its appearance. It was better than I had expected.

"This is the place," said he, knocking at the door.

There were two persons in the shop, a man and a great lubberly boy; and certainly two more ill-favoured specimens of humanity never clubbed faces together to keep the animal creation in countenance.

"Well, Mr. Short, I have brought my nephew to you," said Ludlow.

"Very good," answered Short, gazing upon me, his teeth, as it were, on edge, and his *chevaux-de-frise* eyebrows knitted together. "What is the lad's name?"

"Richard Freeman," replied Ludlow, and they talked together in a low tone for some time.

"I shall take care of all that," said Short, breaking up the conference; "he will be treated, sir, like one of the family—like one of the family," he repeated, pointing to the lubberly boy, who had been staring at me, since my entrance, with his monstrous mouth half, but as I thought at the time, wide open.

"Treated like one of the family—yes," said the boy, with a most odious snuffle, "I know he will. I'm sure, since I've been 'prentice, I've been treated much better than I ever deserved—that I have."

Short directed an oblique, but complacent, glance at his hideous apprentice.

"Do you hear him?" said he, turning to Ludlow: "that boy has a notion o' gratitude I never saw the like on since I was born into the world."

"I ought to," snuffled the boy; "I know I don't deserve such goodness as is showered down upon me here," rubbing his elastic countenance with his sleeve.

"That'll do," cried Short. "Haven't I told you not to be always talking about that? Let the gentleman out, will you? Let him see how handy you are."

"Oh sure!" cried the boy, rising on a sudden, and rushing to the door, and when he had lifted the latch, bowing to the ground.

Ludlow would have taken leave of me, and tendered some money; but I rejected his hand and its contents—a proceeding that astounded the apprentice, whose eyes, when they alighted upon the silver, protruded from their sockets most awfully.

I saw Ludlow, the minute after, looking through the window. He nodded his head, and smiled—and a dismal smile it was; but as I disdained to notice these greetings, he turned slowly and went away.

"There—sit down there, young fellow," said Short, pointing to a vacant seat, "and I'll soon set you about something. If I know what my duty is rightly, it is to make you a thorough good master of your trade, and that's what I mean to do. I'll make you, in time, as good as I am—you can't be better."

"Oh no, sir, that's impossible, I know," said the apprentice.

"Hold your tongue, Joe, when I'm a speaking," cried Short. "You talk very sensible; but you will put your words in when there ain't occasion."

"I fear I do, sometimes; but I'll try to mend," said the boy.

"I know you will, Joe," cried his master. "Now, you Freeman, look at me."

I examined his atrocious visage with minute attention.

"When you see me," resumed Short, "you see one, as a man may say, who has risen out of the ground to what I am now; and how do you suppose? why, by honesty, industry, and steadiness."

"That's good for the ears, that is; that's real wisdom: —oh! *do* hear that," cried Joe in a kind of nasal rapture.

"Joseph Carnaby, you've broken the thread of my argument; can't you admire what I say without interrupt-

ing of me? Where was I? Oh! this was it:—that when you once know Ishmael Short, you know him for ever after."

Here the speaker paused, and looked towards me, as though awaiting a reply.

"Well?" he said, at length, "ain't I right?"

"I dare say you are," said I.

"Say 'sir' to master when he asks you a question," cried Carnaby. "Pray, sir, isn't your name a name in Scripture?"

"Ishmael? it is," said Short.

"Oh! what a thing it is!—what a blessed thing to have had religious parents!" sighed Carnaby.

"So it is," coincided Short; "but that wasn't the reason why I was christened Ishmael."

"Indeed! sir," snuffled Carnaby. "What was?"

"I've told you often; but you've such a head," said the other.

"So I have, sir; I'm very stupid, I know," said the apprentice.

"Well," began Short, with an important 'hem,' "when I was a infant, I was as cross-grained a infant as ever was born into this world. I'd let nobody be, and nobody'd let me be. And so, because Ishmael's hand was against every one, and every one's hand was against Ishmael, they called me after him."

"Dear! dear! but you've altered since then, haven't you, sir?" said Carnaby.

"That reminds me," cried Short, who had been casting sundry malignant glances towards me during his speech, enraged, I suppose, that I evinced no extraordinary interest in his recital, and laying hold upon a strap, as he spoke, "that I mustn't let young fellows have too much their own way, while they're under my care. You've felt this before now, haven't you, Carnaby?"

"I have indeed, sir," responded the apprentice, "and I am thankful for it. It has corrected many of my errors, I hope and trust. Punishment, I have heard you say, is good for youth, and so it is, sir."

"Mind you don't catch it, Freeman, that's all," cried

Short, brandishing the thong in the air. "Eh! what! that savage look again, and I'll—"

"Do what?" said I, rising; "you dare not, sir, without cause. When I shall deserve it—"

"Oh Freeman!" began Carnaby; but he got it smartly across the shoulders.

"Hold your tongue, fool!" exclaimed Short, and Carnaby's mouth, horribly distended, collapsed like lightning.

"When you *do* deserve it," continued Short, more mildly, "you shall have it, that's all."

At this moment, before I could return an answer of defiance, which was at my tongue's end, the door opened, and a robust woman of vast proportions entered, a basket in her hand.

"Ah! he's come, is he?" said she.

"Yes,—look at him;—that's him," replied Short.

"Let's have a look at you," said Mrs. Short, for so it was, "lift up your beak," and laying one hand on the back of my head, and seizing my chin with the other, she looked into my face, and Carnaby's alternately, and then burst into a loud laugh.

"What's the matter now, Mrs. Short?" said her husband.

"Why, I'm thinking they wouldn't pair very well," she replied; "they wouldn't do for chimbley ornaments."

"Chimbley ornaments!" cried Short.

"Oh! Mistress!" said poor Carnaby, "you're always making game of me; I can't help my face."

"That's a pity," she returned; "it wants some help, I can tell you;" and then, having asked my name, and given me an encouraging chuck, she retired into the back room.

"That's your mistress, Freeman," said Short. "There, wax these threads; Joe 'll teach you presently how to fix these bristles to the end of them."

"And a most excellent mistress she is to *me*," cried Carnaby,—"I know she is. I thank my happy fortune, I'm sure."

"I hope *he*'ll have grace to do so," said Short, pointing his awl at me.

"Oh! it is to be hoped, sir," coincided the other, with an aggravated snuffle.

An hour had not elapsed before I could perceive plainly that Short and I would never be likely, as the vulgar say, to set our horses together. A short scene at dinner confirmed my conviction.

"What!" cried he, to his wife, "are you going to help him again? He's had enough, I'm sure. Give that to Joe; he's had scarce any."

"You had a mind to tell a round one when you were at it," answered Mrs. Short; "Joe has been served twice, and Freeman but once. Isn't that true, Joe?"

Carnaby's mouth was too full for utterance. He nodded assent.

Short looked vengeance and hatred, as I handed my plate. His wife observed it. "A pretty thing," said she, "and you'd stint the lad, would you? That's what you took his uncle's thirty guineas for, is it?"

"Thirty guineas!" ejaculated Carnaby, with perpendicular knife and fork, "and was there thirty?"

"There, now; that's not meat for your porridge pot," interrupted Mrs. Short; "hold your peace, or you'll get no pudding. Hand the beer this way, Short. Do you want any more?"

"I only know," said Short, pushing forward his plate, "that to overfeed boys——"

"Is not the way to starve 'em," cried his wife, "that's all you know about it. Never mind, Freeman, don't cry, lad."

"Cry, ma'am," said I, hastily. "I never do that."

"I know you don't," she answered, laughing; "you're a good steel for a flint, I see. You'll strike some sparks out of him. Won't he, old fellow?" to her husband.

"Oh! Mrs. Short!" remonstrated Carnaby, with a mouth like a horse-shoe.

"And oh! Master Long!" returned his mistress; and down came the gravy spoon upon his head.

In the evening, Carnaby, having closed the shop, was despatched to various places with completed orders; and Short betook himself to the ale-house for an hour. When

we were left to ourselves, my mistress took me into unreserved confidence.

"I like the look of you," said she, "but how you'll like us—that's a poser. There's Short—he was always an awkward one to manage; but since that carneying Carnaby has been with us, it's as much as I can do to keep him under. That Joe—that Joe's as deep a put as here and there one. There—he flatters up that fool of a husband of mine, that he makes him believe he's one of the seven wise men; when, if the truth must be told, he's no more brains than a broom-stick. I wish we could get shut of him; but he's bound for five long years. That fellow 'ud make a mile-stone believe that the coach couldn't run without it, and 'ud flatter a donkey's hind leg off—he would!"

Carnaby came in to supper shortly after; having eaten which, he expressed a desire of retiring to bed, and taking off his shoes, he scrutinised the soles closely.

"How boys *do* wear out their shoe-leather!" he observed, shaking his head, "and yet, ma'am, I take the utmost care, and never go upon the kibbling stones, I don't;" and so saying, and sighing, he deposited them on end in a convenient corner.

"Is Freeman to go along with me?" he resumed, lighting a candle. I arose, and prepared to accompany him.

"Oh, Mrs. Short," said he, with what was intended for a seductive smile, "I shall be quite happy now I've got a fellow 'prentice."

"Shall you?" cried his mistress. "I thought you were quite happy before; you've said so often enough."

"Have I?" cried he, "and so, sure, I have. But I'm very young yet, ma'am, and youths never know their own hearts. None rightly do, I have heard say. Good-night, ma'am," and he retired slowly, with a very low bow.

"Oh! Freeman!" he said impressively, when we were got into a back attic, containing two small beds, "how glad I am you've come to live with us. Shall we be friends together?"

"If you like," said I.

"To live in peace and harmony with every one," he

rejoined, putting on his nightcap, "that's real happiness, that is. They are such good creatures—our master and mistress; oh! such a worthy couple. I strive to please them every way I can, by civility, and obedience, and attention to my duty; and so I hope you will do, Freeman. Shall we have a long talk, brother?" and clasping his knees with his arms, so as to make them a convenient support for his chin, he sat in the bed budge, and prepared for colloquy.

I declined the offer on the plea of sleepiness and fatigue, and bade him good-night.

"Well, it will be best," he assented, subsiding softly into bed, "for I get up very early of a morning. I light my mistress's fire; it isn't my place to do so; but it gets me her good will, which I hope to get from every one who may be pleased to know me. Besides, early rising is the way to wealth; no one can be rich who doesn't rise betimes."

"You learned that when you were a child," said I; "I remember the stuff still:

> "Getting up early
> Keeps the wig curly;
> Getting up late
> Makes a bald pate."

"What's that?" he exclaimed, in an ecstasy, popping up his head, "oh, Freeman! do teach me that piece of poetry."

I repeated the doggrel, conjuring him to go to sleep, and let me rest in peace.

"I never heard that before," he observed, "and I shall never forget it. I'll lay it to heart, for it's true wisdom. Oh, brother," and here he burst forth into a flood of cant, which I was constrained to stop by a threat of exercising my bolster upon his cranium.

More than a week passed away, and I had just become thoroughly disgusted at the position I occupied in the social scale, when an accident happened which precipitated my departure whilst it furnished a pretext for it. I had already resolved within me that a fortnight should be my utmost limit; the accident referred to abridged it by five days.

It was on an afternoon, that Mrs. Short came into the shop with a pair of lady's shoes in her hand.

"See," said she, "these shoes are all ready, and Freeman shall take them home. He has not been once abroad since in the house he's been."

"Give 'em to Joe," cried Short, "he'll run with 'em. I'll keep this young fellow pretty strict; he's precious proud, and would be saucy if I'd let him."

"Now, Short," returned his wife, "I say that Freeman shall go; you're for Carnaby: which, do you think, is to have their way this time? Why, I shall, to be sure; and so your parcel's made up. Here, Freeman, get your hat, and take these shoes to Mrs. L'Estrange, No. 15, Bloomsbury Square. It's hard by—just over the way."

"Oh, ma'am," cried Carnaby, beseechingly, "do let me go with them to that excellent lady. I'm sure, whenever she sees me, she gives me such good advice, that I'm all the better for it, every time I go."

"You are all the better for something else she gives you, I take it," returned Mrs. Short, quietly, "and so there's a stopper for your cruet."

The shoes being placed in a bag, I was sent away, and soon found myself at the door of Mrs. L'Estrange. The servant to whom I imparted my business, directed me to walk up stairs into the front room, where I should find the lady. When I entered the room, which I did silently, the door having been what is termed "a-jar," I discovered a very little woman, magnificently dressed, parading before a large mirror; now advancing towards, and now retreating from it; anon skipping from side to side in a manner so utterly wanting in vigour, as to betoken that the performer was pretty well stricken in years.

At length, either beholding my distant reflection in the glass, or hearing the short cough with which I sought to interrupt her measured exercises, she turned suddenly round, and presenting to inspection a face highly embellished with paint, said—

"And, pry'thee, who art thou?"

I stated from whom I came, and presented my credentials.

"And where is that respectful young man, who usually comes upon these occasions?" inquired the lady; "not gone, I hope?"

I answered that a pressure of business had prevented his attendance upon her.

"Thou art a vast deal handsomer, child," she said, seating herself, "but I doubt whether thou wilt make thy way in the world as he will. Dost know how to handle a lady's foot?" and she slipped off her shoe, and stretched it forth, gazing at it from side to side with much complacency.

"What is the lad's name—Carnaby? yes, Carnaby says," and she simpered and continued to survey her symmetrical extremity, under her half-closed eye-lids, "that mine is the smallest foot in town. Come, give me one of thy shoes, while thou fittest on the other."

I heartily wished, at the moment, that Carnaby were there, rather than I, to put his praise and practice into operation. However, there was no help for it. Down I went upon one knee, and laying hold of the lady's ankle, endeavoured to insinuate the "smallest foot in town" into the shoe.

"What in the name of Vulcan," exclaimed Mrs. L'Estrange, "is the rude bear of a boy about? Dost think thou art shoeing a horse? Thou young Nero, thou!" and she saluted me with several smart taps upon the sensorium with the heel of the other shoe.

I raised my head hastily, as well I might, and with an unpardonable inadvertence caused it, with a crash, to come in contact with the lady's somewhat prolonged chin. I thought at the time, and so no doubt did she, that I had disarranged her dental economy.

"Help! in mercy's name, help!" she cried, throwing herself back in her chair. "Mr. L'Estrange! where are you?" and she repeated these outcries whilst I arose, disconcerted, to my feet.

The door of an inner room opened, and the tall figure of a young man entered, with a face so barren of expression and insignificant of feature, as to appear transitive—a sort of vanishing countenance.

Savage with Mr. and Mrs. L'Estrange.

London: Richard Bentley & Son 1886

"Wherefore is this outcry?" said Mr. L'Estrange, raising his almost imperceptible eyebrows. "My life! what is the matter? A pity," he added, passing his hand over his forehead, "that I cannot pursue my studies in peace—ever these alarming and heathenish diversions."

"Bring me my salts, sir," cried his wife.

"My dearest love, I will," said the phantom.

"Diversions, do you call them?" exclaimed Mrs. L'Estrange, sniffing vigorously at her salts.

"Pardon me," cried the husband, hastily; "I used the word in its strict sense. But what, my angel, has occurred? who is this youth?"

Mrs. L'Estrange now recounted her mishap, and concluded by calling me a monster, and a young Scythian barbarian.

"Ah! I see—I see," said Mr. L'Estrange, taking a pinch of snuff, "fortuitous, fortuitous. Is the mouth better now, my life?"

"Something easier, I think," replied the lady; "send the odious boy away."

"Now, I could prove to demonstration," said her husband, not heeding her, "either that you, my dear, were right, and the youth wrong; or that the youth was right, and you, my love, were wrong. Firstly—"

"None of your rights and your wrongs, and your demonstrations, I beseech you," cried Mrs. L'Estrange; "they will only tire your——"

"Jaws?" suggested L'Estrange.

"Yes, without easing mine."

L'Estrange gently pawed the air.—"A lingering peevishness!" he remarked, in an undertone. "Come hither, youth. Cannot you beg pardon of this lady for the alarm you have occasioned her?"

"Certainly," I answered, and stepping forward I expressed, in becoming terms, my regret at what had happened—declared that it was purely accidental—and said, in conclusion, that I was certain I should not plead in vain for forgiveness from so fine and so handsome a lady.

The face of Mrs. L'Estrange underwent gradual molli-

fication, as I proceeded with my speech, and by the time I had concluded it had settled into confirmed benignity.

"Didst hear, L'Estrange?" she inquired.

"Apt, concise, sufficient," he replied; "take up your bag, youth, and depart."

"Canst make a bow, child?" she said, with an amiable smile.

I performed a respectful inclination.

"Didst see, Jocelyn?" she demanded.

"Decent, polite, urbane," said he.

"Give him a shilling, Mr. L'Estrange, I beg; I will reimburse you."

I had made my parting bow, and was on the stairs, when he followed me.

"Stay!" said he. His eyes were up-turned for a time, in meditation.

"Inexplicable beings — are women!" he uttered, at length: "ah! I forgot the shilling;" and drawing one from his pocket, he pressed it into the palm of my hand, as though designing to put me off with a mere impression of the coin. "Go," he said, relinquishing it, and making an abortive endeavour at a wink, "and thank *the handsome lady* for it."

When I got back, I could not forbear, Short being absent, telling my mistress what had happened. She laughed heartily, shaking her vast sides with evident satisfaction.

"Here," said I, "is what Carnaby wanted," producing the shilling, which, with a fillip of my thumb-nail, I sent flying towards him. He caught it with admirable dexterity, and committed it to his pocket. "How very kind of the good lady to send it to me!"

"Did any one ever see the like of that?" cried Mrs. Short; "you sneaking hound! Give it back, this instant."

Carnaby looked astonishment at the unreasonable proposition. Happily for his bones, Short, at this instant, returned.

"I'll take the dust out of your coat for this another time," said Mrs. Short, who, by way of entertaining her consort, forthwith narrated the particulars of my interview with Mrs. L'Estrange.

However greatly Mrs. Short might have been tickled by my recital, certain it is, her husband could discover no humorous properties therein; for, knitting his brows savagely, and setting his teeth on edge, he cast a baleful glance upon me, and worked his fingers upon the palm of his hand, as though inwardly moulding some fell intent.

"And so," cried he, "I'm to lose my best customer through that chap's impudence. No—no—that's a shoe that won't fit, as you say, Mrs. Short. I've been longing to be at him this week past, and now I've caught him, sure enough."

With this, he laid hold upon his often-menaced strap, and making towards me, dealt me a severe blow upon the side of the head. I caught the weapon with one hand, but it slipped through my fingers, and with the other aimed a retort, as he retreated, at the rascal's nose; which was so nearly taking effect that he rubbed that feature incredulously, shaking his ugly jole as he did so. Snatching up a heavy last, as he prepared to repeat his blow, I bade him be upon his guard.

"There, now, drop that," exclaimed his wife, interposing; "that dumpling's too hard for the meat."

"I shall not," said I, "till he lays down the strap—the base scoundrel."

"Oh, Freeman!" cried Carnaby, who had been sitting open-mouthed during this scene, but who now arose, outspread, as it were, like a phœnix, "you wouldn't go to fling that—oh la! at dear good master. Murder!"

"There, now, keep your rosin for another fiddlestick," said Mrs. Short, lending him an open-handed cuff, that sent him careering to the other end of the shop.

"I'll give it to the villain, soundly," exclaimed Short, who took advantage of my momentary observation of Carnaby's evolutions to direct another cut at me, which I, however, evaded. The moment after a hollow sound proceeded from his stomachic region. The last had taken terrific effect in that quarter, and fell, as though purposely, upon his gouty toe.

All now became confusion worse confounded. Carnaby dashed forward with affectionate eagerness towards his

grinning master, hovering about him with whimpering solicitations as to the amount of injury he had sustained. The awkward cub, however, during these officious blandishments, chanced to set his heel upon the ill-fated member, which the last had just previously inflamed to torture.

"Curse you, you blaring brute, and *you*, too!" cried Short, in a paroxysm of rage and pain; "see how you like that," and down went poor Carnaby upon hands and knees.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. Short, incensed at my treatment of her husband, advanced towards me with an enormous fist, designing to bestow upon me, as she would say, "a goose for my gander;" but unfortunately for her, and just the reverse, perhaps, for me—just as she was making a fearful spring at me, Carnaby, impelled by Short, fell, as the vulgar have it, "flop" between us, over whom the fat woman tumbled like a sack of sand.

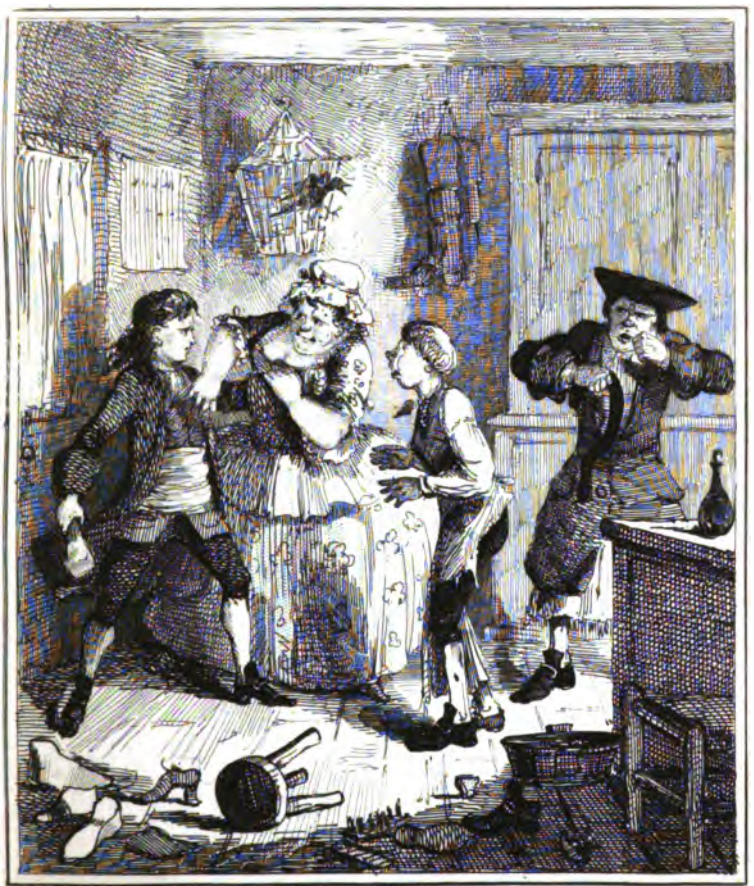
"Drat that confounded blockhead, he's always——"

I heard no more. Taking advantage of the helpless condition of the trio, I seized my hat, and made the best of my way out of the shop.

CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE SHOWS HIS SPIRIT, AND GREATLY PERPLEXES HIS AGED PROTECTRESS, WITH A MOMENT'S GLIMPSE OF A REMARKABLE LADY, AND HIS INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMILY OF A STRANGE ORIGINAL.

My first impulse, when I reached Lincoln's Inn Fields, led me to indulge in an immoderate fit of laughter at the expense of the cordwaining crew, whom I had just left in so disastrous a plight. But presently, the stinging pangs of Short's strap, which still preyed upon my ear, caused my thoughts to tend towards Ludlow, whom I resolved immediately to find out, and tax as the chief author of my disgraceful wrongs. By dint of many inquiries, and my partial recollection of the locality of Lady Mason's house, I was, at length, enabled to find my way thither.



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Ludlow was not a little surprised to see me; and much more so when, leisurely divesting myself of the leathern apron, which Mrs. Short had provided for me on my introduction to business, I folded it methodically together, and placed it upon the table, saying, "Lie you there; I have done with you for the present."

"Why, what has happened?" demanded Ludlow.

I told him all, precisely as it had occurred; inquiring at the conclusion what he thought of it—and of me—and of himself.

An angry scene ensued. Ludlow begged, threatened, promised, entreated. Would I return for a month, for a few days, for a week, till he could bring over his lady to my view of the question? No—no—*no*. Go back, I would not. See Lady Mason, I would. I was inflexible, and Ludlow began to wring his hands.

"Would to heaven!" he exclaimed, "that I had had nothing to do, from the first, with this unfortunate business! I never approved of the design of putting you to a shoemaker; but what could a poor fellow like myself do? Women, Richard,—even the best,—and Lady Mason *is* a good woman,—will have their own way. I fear, I shall never prevail upon her to see you."

"Yes you will, when you inform her that I mean to go before a justice, and tell him how I have been treated; and demand to know by whose authority her ladyship has been constituted battledore, and how much longer I am to play shuttlecock."

"Good God! why, you wouldn't do that, surely," cried Ludlow, alarmed.

I suspect he could see by my face that I would be as good as my word; for he precipitately left the room, to confer with Lady Mason.

He returned in about three hours.

"I have been gone a long time," said he, "and here have I left you sitting in the dark."

"Yes," I replied, "here have I been sitting in the dark. I hope, now you are come, you are disposed to enlighten me."

He would not perceive my drift, but rang for candles.

"Richard," he said, "you have greatly distressed and offended Lady Mason. Your threat of going before a justice has pained her exceedingly. It would do you no good. You would be abandoned by all your friends, and by her, who is, I assure you, your best friend."

"Will her ladyship see me?" I inquired.

"She will to-morrow morning. In the meantime, she desires that you will reflect upon your folly (as she calls it) in leaving a situation she has been at some pains and expense to provide for you. She expects that you will be prepared to go back again to-morrow."

I smiled in bitter scorn. "Have you a book you could lend me?"

"Dick," cried Ludlow, "you shan't go back. How came it not to strike me before? I can place you with a person——"

"A tailor, I suppose, Mr. Ludlow," said I; "a very decent handicraft."

"A tailor!" cried Ludlow, with unusual animation, "hang the cross-legs! No, Dick; he's a gentleman who has been in want of a clerk for some time; and I'll make a gentleman of *you*. I've saved money, and I've no one I ought to care for, and nobody cares for me. And——"

"Well, but, my dear friend—" I interposed.

"And if Lady Mason will not do you justice within three months from this time, I will. You shall know all. Yes—yes," he pursued, earnestly, "it shall out. I have been too tame—too weak, foolish, complying."

"I will hear what Lady Mason says to-morrow morning."

"You will hear nothing," he answered, "but that you must go back to the cobbler. Oh! she has wished to be your friend, but a cursed fate has prevented it. She need not know but that you have returned to Short. I will have it so. Will you promise to be patient for three months longer?"

"I do not know that I ought," said I.

"I do," he replied. "It *must* not be longer, I will tell her so." He added, with a peculiar look, "It's against nature."

"How if I should be able to prevail upon her to do me justice to-morrow morning?"

"Lad! lad! I wish you could!" he returned; "but that, I fear, cannot be. She has stronger reasons than ever for secrecy; but I am not—must not be bound by them. Come, we will have some supper."

On the next morning he tapped at the door of my room, and on being admitted, "See," said he, "I have brought you your best suit. Make yourself as gay as you can, and show her ladyship that you don't look like a cobbler, at least. Be very respectful, I entreat. Should she dismiss you before I return, wait for me in my room. I am going to Myte."

"Who is Myte?" said I, as we ascended the stairs.

"Hush!" he replied; "the gentleman to whom I mean to introduce you."

He left me at the door. "Now, be very, very respectful to her ladyship," he repeated, giving me the model of a reverential bow.

I found her ladyship seated in state, with a set and formal face, assumed, doubtless, to daunt me; but it had a directly contrary effect. It recalled my self-possession.

"Richard Freeman," she said, and hesitated.

I approached, bowing profoundly. "I wish, madam, I might crave the honour of hearing, for the first time in my life, and from your lips—my real name."

"Sir," she exclaimed, angrily, and scanned me with an uncertain eye that avoided mine—"your schoolmaster has, at least, taught you confidence."

"I am happy to hear it," I replied; "I shall, I fear, need it. Your ladyship, permit me to hope, has no intention of teaching me shame."

"Insolent!"

"No, madam, not so;" and I stood erect before her. "Why, but to disgrace, to humiliate, to degrade me, have you committed me to the indignity of submission to a cobbler? No, madam, you shall not teach me shame."

"Child," replied her ladyship, "and proud child that you are; it was with no such intention that that calling was provided for you; circumstances alone render it imperative that you should be so disposed of."

"Calling!" "Disposed of!" phrases my young stomach was too high to bear.

"Madam," said I, "since—so Ludlow tells me—these circumstances are not to be made known to me, I must be allowed to object to the calling they point out, and the disposition of me they enforce."

"How, boy?" said Lady Mason, angrily; but there was a softened sorrow in her eye which I noted well; "do you dare to repeat the threat you held out to Ludlow?"

"No, madam; because I am sure it is unnecessary. You destined me for something better, when I was ignorant and would have been contented with something worse; you must not—let me say so—you *must* not condemn me to this, having made me worthy of a higher station."

She offered no reply, but sighed heavily, covering her face with her handkerchief.

"Let me be for a few minutes," she said, at length. "I will consider. Would to God you had never been born!"

"Of such inexplicable and invisible parents," I added, mentally, as I retired from before her. "Old Mother Freeman was worth a score of such enigmatical kindred."

After a quarter of an hour's cogitation, she recalled me.

"I have been turning over in my mind your objections to the course of life I had designed for you," she said; "and I think something better may be done for you. But I must not be hurried. Indeed, at present, I know not how I can serve you. Return to your employment. Be a good and obedient boy, and perhaps in a few months——"

"I will trouble you no more, madam," said I, impatiently; "neither will I fulfil the threat I held out last night to Mr. Ludlow. I will pursue my own course, and it shall not lie in the direction of a cobbler's stall."

"Stay!" cried her ladyship, recalling me, "that must not be. Oh! how cruel is my situation! Even you, Richard, did you know it, would pity me."

And so I did, to see the tears trickling down that venerable face; but I would not show that I did. It occurred to me, however, that Burridge's advice, as to supplication on a bent knee, might be worth adoption for once. I

advanced, therefore, and was about to throw myself at her feet. "Oh, madam! hear me," I began; but the ghastly expression of her features arrested me. She was gazing intently, it seemed, at something behind me. I turned—a lady stood before us.

She was a majestic woman of fine proportions. Her features were prominent and handsome, her complexion was light and singularly clear, and her eyes were large, grey and lucid.

She smiled, observing our confusion, and gently tapped her arm with her closed fan. I thought, when she did smile, I had never seen a sweeter—rather, a more gracious lady.

"Your ladyship has a youthful suitor," she remarked.

Lady Mason at last found her voice.

"Ludlow's nephew," she said; "go away, my good boy; I will think of your application, and let your uncle know my mind upon it."

"Mr. Ludlow's nephew!—indeed!" cried the lady; "I did not know he had one."

I bowed, and was retiring. As my glance met hers, there was a slight parting of the lips, and an elevation, scarce perceptible, of the eyebrow; and then the same enchanting smile.

I approached the door. Ludlow was there; thrust bodily into the room, one hand half-clenched raised to his head, the other out-stretched, with an upturned crooked finger. His face—it was not so much like a face as a mask—all eyes and teeth, and eyebrows to the very wig. Seizing me, when I came within hand-gripe, he pulled me out of the apartment, and hurrying me down stairs, huddled me and himself into his own room, the door of which he locked.

"Well, Dick," said he, in a hasty and excited manner, as soon as he could get his breath, "Myte is prepared to receive you, and is anxious to see you."

"So it seems," I replied, "and impatient too, or why did you hale me down stairs in that extraordinary manner? Who is the beautiful lady above?"

"Beautiful, do you call her?" cried Ludlow. "She,

beautiful! She may be; but well do I know—too well do I know—that beauty and goodness don't always go together."

"Well, but who is she?" I repeated.

"She is a woman, Richard—hush, hark! going so soon?"

He listened intently. There was a rustling in the hall—the street door was opened and closed presently.

"Thank God! she's gone," said he; "who is she? did you ask?—she's a woman who hates me, as she hates the devil, I was going to say—but him she loves—a woman who thinks I have already too much encroached upon my lady's goodness, and who, knowing you are my nephew——"

"Which she does not know," said I.

"She thinks so; and would strive to injure me and you——"

"That is not likely!" I exclaimed, interrupting him. "Do you mean to say——" A thought suddenly struck me, "That lady is connected with me, Ludlow?"

"No," he replied, promptly.

My looks repeated the question.

"On my soul, she is not!"

"Who is she, then; what is her name?"

"Perdition seize me, and the lies I am forced—driven to utter!" cried Ludlow, violently; "but *you* shall not make me tell them. What is she, or her name to you—it is Bellamy."

"Is she married?" I inquired.

"Yes, and has a numerous family—young masters and misses, as proud as their mother. She lives in St. James's Square. What more?"

"Is she related to Lady Mason?"

"No more than you are to her," he answered, smiling.

I would have proceeded with my interrogatories, but he was called away to attend his mistress. He returned with a sprightly air.

"Good news, my boy," said he. "Her ladyship is delighted that I have obtained a situation for you with Mr. Myte. She allows that it is more suited to your education and prospects than the other. And she promises,

and bade me tell you so—that within three months you shall be made acquainted with everything.'

As we trudged along towards Myte's house, Ludlow enlarged upon the virtues and estimable qualities of that gentleman, telling me that he was one of the best of husbands, fathers, and friends—that he was rich, good-natured, and generous. He told me also that I should not want money—that he himself would supply me; that my evenings would be at my own disposal, and that I might see as much life, and enjoy as much of it, as I pleased. All this was especially gratifying, and disposed me to think much less of my parents, and a great deal more of myself. I fear I did not think enough of Ludlow's kindness.

We were admitted into an office, where we discovered a rather elderly gentleman seated at a low desk. He arose at our approach—that is to say, he got upon his legs, an act which might have contributed to his former height some two inches. Ludlow was a man of small stature and proportions, but he was a giant to Myte, who was as diminutive as a man can be well supposed to be, who is not deformed. His face was extremely fair, fresh, and plump, with a nose like a parrot's beak, and eyes of a similar, lateral, roguish gravity. A mouth like a little O, and a flight of chins leading down to his breast-bone, complete the picture.

"And so you've brought him with you," he said, casting a sidelong ogle towards me.

"Yes, here he is, sir," replied Ludlow.

"Getting towards sixteen, you said," returned Myte. "Tall of his age—up in the air—one of the sky-sweepers. Do you know, Jeremiah," turning to Ludlow, whom he took by the coat, "when I was his age, my grandmother thought I should have made a shoot upwards, and whenever the thought entered her head, (and, by the way, thoughts very seldom came there, and never stayed more than two minutes,) she made me march under her cane, which she placed horizontally against a line she had marked on the wainscot. I did it clean for three years, when the old lady lost heart, saying I should do for a Smithfield droll."

Ludlow forced a grim smile. "She was mistaken," said he.

"None of your jeers," cried Myte. "Come, what is your nephew's name?"

"Freeman," said Ludlow, "Richard Freeman."

"Richard Freeman! and a very good English name, too. *Free man*—it has an old British sound with it. Eh? what? just listen to this, Jeremiah Woful," and with a theatrical air he repeated,—

> "'I am as *free* as nature first made *man*,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran!'

"That's John Dryden—one of his Almanzor flights; and I've heard Betterton roll and thunder it out—*I* have. You may laugh, young gentleman," addressing me, "but you had not laughed, had you heard Betterton. Why," nudging me, confidentially, "I have lent Betterton money."

"And he repaid you, I have no doubt," said Ludlow.

"Repaid me!—ay, that he has a thousand-fold. I saw him in all his best parts."

"He repaid you in money, I mean," observed Ludlow. "I have heard he was a man of honour."

"The very soul of honour," cried Myte. "Who could think of that man's body? I have got his bond, Jeremiah, and I would not part with his signature for twenty times the sum he signed for. But, get you gone; Ricardo and I shall much better understand each other, and much sooner, without you." So saying, he pushed him out of the door.

"That uncle of yours, Ricardo," he said, returning to me, "is the most sad-looking person these eyes ever lighted upon."

"A very grave man, indeed, sir," I answered.

"Grave, grievous—a face as much as to say, 'Whose dog's dead, that I may come and howl over it?' No cause, no cause; well to do, well to do. That is why I call him Jeremiah Woful."

"Indeed, sir," said I, somewhat amused by this original.

"Yes, indeed," he replied. "I have names for all my

acquaintances. But you are looking for something to do. Do you like active employment?"

"I have no doubt I shall, sir, when I have become used to it."

"That won't be while you're here," returned Myte. "Look you, my ingenuous young friend; I sell houses when I have houses to sell, to certain persons—when I can find them; and I buy houses when there are houses to be bought from certain persons, who may wish to sell them. But at present I have neither houses to be sold nor persons to purchase, nor do I wish to have. All my business, therefore, is to do nothing, and look as though I had plenty to do; and all yours will be to look as though you had plenty to do, and do nothing."

"An easy life, sir," I said, laughing.

"So so, for that," replied Myte: "I've found yawning hard work before now. But you can carry a letter, and bring an answer, and draw a bill, and say I'm out when I wish I were not in, and all that?"

"Oh, yes."

"And all these things you promise solemnly to perform?"

"I do."

"And you faithfully engage to talk no more than your tongue will let you, and as little good sense as you can; not 'two and two make four—two and two make four,' in the moral or maxim way, for all that I hate; besides, I know, in morals, two and two often make five."

"I promise all this, sir."

"Good lad, very good lad," said Myte. "Kiss that book," handing me a volume of the Tatler. "But come," said he, "let's go upstairs, and see 'Heaven's last, best gift,' as the poet has it—the fair creation, three samples of which I have upstairs. Why, I have a wife and two daughters."

"Indeed!" said I.

"Why indeed? you should have said, 'Joy be with you, Colbrand,' for that's *my* name. Mind that stair. That's been two summersets, seven sprained ankles, and bruised hips out of number. I've been thinking of having it

mended these twelve years. When it comes to a broken leg, I'll have the leg and it set to rights together."

"Here," said he, handing me forward, and presenting me to his wife and daughters. "Good people, I've brought you a young friend, whom I commend to your especial good offices. This, Ricardo, is Mrs. Myte, known in this house (but only so addressed by me) by the style and title of Flusterina. My love," with assumed surprise, "I once told you, many years ago, that I loved the very ground you trod upon, and you're always reminding me of it, by carrying some upon your face."

Mrs. Myte appealed to her daughters.

"Is my face dirty, my loves?"

The young ladies smiled, and shook their heads. A slight tap with the fan upon the small skull of Myte was the gentle punishment meted out to the delinquent.

"And here," continued Myte, "are Madam Margaret, and Mistress Martha, commonly called my Goth and Vandal; they will permit you to salute their cheeks."

The girls blushed, while I promptly availed myself of the privilege.

"And now," said Myte, "since you will have plenty of leisure to cultivate the esteem of these ladies, let me show you your dormitory. You must know," he resumed, as we ascended the stairs, "that I slept in that room for ten years, before I was married, and I used to call it—that's Signor Tomaso"—in parenthesis, pointing to a large cat which had been asleep on the landing, but which now came forward, and placing its fore-paws upon Myte's knee-pan, stretched itself leisurely. "I used to call it Paradise," he proceeded, "it was such a snug room, till the fire broke out, and I had to jump out of the window into a large blanket."

Having taken me into every room in the house, commenting upon each, and inquiring at intervals, whether I thought I could be comfortable under his roof, he brought me back again to the drawing-room.

"Go in there," said he, "and make interest for a dish of chocolate. I am going to meet a gentleman at White's."

The ladies vied in their attentions towards me; and I soon began to feel, that if I were not as happy as I could wish with Myte and his family, it would be entirely my own fault. When Myte returned, and during the afternoon, he amused me with his innocent freaks and fooleries. In the evening, he played upon the fiddle, and made his wife sing, and his daughters dance, and tried to sing himself; and, finally, would have accomplished a dance, but that the potency of a sneaker of punch of which he had partaken had so impaired the stability of his small legs, that his family judged it inexpedient that he should hazard the feat. I myself confess to having seen two candles in my hand when I retired to bed; and had Myte's disastrous stair been upon the flight I had occasion to ascend, I think it very likely I might have added to the list of casualties in his possession.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE MAKES A VERY REMARKABLE DISCOVERY, AND FINDS THAT HE HAS MADE AS REMARKABLE A MISTAKE.

A GOOD understanding subsisted between Ludlow and Myte. The latter had long ceased to sell houses, and was in reality a lender of money to great people, and young heirs, which latter, he used to say, if they were determined to run through their estates, might as well buy their shoes of him as of anybody else. His transactions, therefore, required no assistance of mine. My days, indeed, were spent in his office, and not unprofitably, for he gave me free access to his library; but my evenings were entirely at my own disposal.

Ludlow came frequently to visit me, and on each successive occasion with an apparent increase of satisfaction. He supplied me with an abundance of money, and bade me want for nothing I could reasonably desire, which money might procure. Of daily wants, Myte was a most liberal purveyor; but I soon became anxious to qualify for a pretty

fellow; and, accordingly, I recruited and embellished my wardrobe; took lessons in fencing and dancing; sometimes showed myself at a play—frequented a coffee-house of minor pretensions; ogled the women, and made "the passion" my study.

Myte was greatly amused at the gradual change in my appearance and manners. "On my word, Ricardo," he would say, turning me about, "Woful's money looks gay, rolled out into lace upon that coat of thine. You have already turned my Goth and Vandal's brains. They want hoops; and Flusterina will have it so. Hoops! when they get them, they must knock them off the tub of Diogenes, and bring me the old cynic's lantern, that I may look after two honest men to take them off my hands afterwards. Get a rapier next, and, the first thing you do with it, pink Jeremiah Woful. A few ounces of blood taken from him would do him much good."

But if Myte was amused, Ludlow was delighted. "That's it—that's it," said he one day, "this is what I always intended, but the bowl, as I may say, was not rolled on the right bias. Do you see much company up stairs?"

"O yes; frequently."

"Young fellows, I suppose, after the daughters?"

"There are two or three, who, I dare say, meditate——"

"Marriage?—um!" said Ludlow—"well; that's no business of ours. Have you seen any one you know, Richard, since you have been here?"

"Whom *do* I know?" I replied.

"I mean," pursued Ludlow, "any one you have seen before?"

"Not a soul."

Ludlow was silent for a short space. "Mr. Burridge has been in town," he said, at length.

"Indeed!"

"Yes; and waited upon Lady Mason, who declined to see him."

"Is not that rather extraordinary?" said I.

"I don't know," he continued. "He wanted to know where he could find you, but I was forbidden to tell him."

A scene of anger on my side, and pretexts and excuses on his, ensued.

About ten days after Ludlow's visit, a lady, stepping out of a chair, entered the office—the very lady whom I had seen for a moment, at Lady Mason's house. I laid down the book I had been reading, and advanced from my desk. She started—no, the word is too strong—she drew back her head on perceiving me, and inquired if Myte was at home. I replied that he was.

"Surely, young gentleman," she said, "I have seen you somewhere—not here—but——"

"At Lady Mason's house, madam," I replied.

She *did* start, then; and a gravity took possession of her face. "I remember. You are, then, Ludlow's nephew?" with a forced complaisance. I bowed.

"Will you be so good as to apprise Mr. Myte that I am here?"

"Certainly, madam," and I proceeded to Myte's private office.

"Mrs. Bellamy, sir, desires to see you," said I, accosting that gentleman, who was engaged upon an occupation very common with him, namely, carving with his penknife a small hideous head out of wood.

"Mrs. Bellamy!" he exclaimed, laying down the subject of his labours, "and who, Ricardo, is Mrs. Bellamy?"

"I really don't know," I replied.

"Nor I," he returned—"Bellamy? Bellamy? Let's call in the aid of one's optics. We'll go and see Bellamira. Come along."

Myte fell back a pace or two, when he beheld his visitor. "Why, Ricardo," he cried, with an inquisitive side-eye, "who told you this lady was Mrs. Bellamy? Madam," turning to her with a low bow, "the honour you do me——"

"Will be soon forgotten in the occasion, no doubt," said the lady, smiling. "I have come upon my old business."

"My dear madam," returned Myte in a deprecating tone, "if I had Plutus' mine, my very good friends would exhaust it: nay, it *is* worked clean out."

"You must discover a new vein for me, however, good Mr. Myte," she answered, laughing. "But I mistook you for a man of gallantry, sir. Do you keep a lady standing?"

"A thousand pardons!" cried Myte, hurrying to the door of his private office, which he opened. "Be pleased to honour me by walking this way."

As the lady swept past him into his room, Myte faced about towards me, casting up his hands and eyes ruefully; and then, throwing out one foot, and turning round swiftly upon the toe of the other, tottered after her.

I waited with indescribable impatience the termination of the conference between this lady and Myte. What did Ludlow mean, who must have known better, by calling her Bellamy? Why did he inquire of me, whether I had seen any person since I had lived with Myte, whom I had ever seen before? Besides, there was something in her appearance, in her face, in her air, that would have excited my curiosity, and engaged my interest—I think so—had I beheld her under the most ordinary circumstances. Wherefore should Ludlow have withdrawn me from her presence in so abrupt, so alarmed, nay, in so terrified a manner? Why did Lady Mason turn pale and tremble? Why, lastly, was I such a blockhead as to give credence to the wretched story—the lie, which Ludlow, at a moment's notice, had set up, and which had stood thus long?

While I was yet revolving these doubts, the lady and Myte came forth; the latter bustling forward to hand her to her chair. She regarded me, as she passed, with a look of more than common observation. I returned her gaze, for the first time in my life to a human being, timidly, and with hesitation. There was a fascination in her eye that held me spell-bound. Beautiful she was, but not young. She might be—my heart fluttered in my bosom at the thought—my eyes filled with water—she was gone.

"Do you think," said Myte, returning, "because you are one of the sons of Adam, that his prerogative has devolved upon you of bestowing what names you please; or are you going to take a leaf out of my book, or to snatch my book out of my hands? Bellamy! But what? what?

you are ill, Ricardo. What ails you? You're as white as a chamberlain's wand."

I replied that a sudden faintness had seized me, but that I was now better. "Who, then, sir," I added, "is that lady? Mr. Ludlow told me her name was Bellamy."

"Epigrams upon a tombstone!—Woful turned wag!" cried Myte; "*I* call her Semiramis; she's as proud as the Queen of the Assyrians, as high as the Tower of Belus. Mortals call her Brett—Mrs. Brett."

"Do you not think her a very fine woman, sir?" I inquired.

"Pandora's box looked like a casket," answered he. "If I were to tell you her history—but, Lord! Ludlow has done that, no doubt, and called her Bellamy to conceal the relationship."

"Related to Ludlow!" cried I, in amazement.

"I hope Jeremiah has worthier kin," said he. "No—to Lady Mason—she is Lady Mason's daughter."

Oh, Ludlow! I cursed him at that moment. "No more related to Lady Mason than you to her." He had said this. Lying rogue! And yet, what, after all, if he had spoken truth? I was in an agony to learn all that Myte could communicate. "Pray, sir," said I, "tell me the history of this lady."

Myte, having seated himself, had thrown his leg over his knee, which he was smoothing with his hands, preparatory to the expected narrative, when a young gentleman walked into the office. I wished Mr. Langley, for that was his name, in a certain place, which, perhaps, will never receive him, for his ill-timed visit.

Mr. Langley was a gay young fellow about town, heir to a good estate and a baronetcy, of considerable collateral expectations, with a tolerable figure, good teeth, and great vivacity, which he mistook for wit. He was a frequent visitor at Myte's house, and the very humble servant of Madam Margaret, whom her father, with good-natured injustice, termed "Goth," and who, countenanced by her mother, graciously received Mr. Langley's attentions—attentions which Myte himself could not, or would not, see.

"My dear '*multum in parvo*,'" cried Langley, "thou 'sunshine in a shady place,' I want a ray of beneficence from you. Shine out fifty pieces, or I am undone."

"I can't, Alcibiades Wildgoose," returned Myte, looking up, with his foot in his hand. "Can't—Mrs. Brett has been here, and has shorn me of all my beams. I'm as dull as a pewter platter."

"Hang her! syren," said Langley; "as gay and extravagant as ever. But what am I to do? If I run after the Israelites, I shall soon be, like Pharaoh and his host, under water."

"Borrow of the wandering Jew," answered Myte: "he must have saved money by this time, or the devil's in it."

"Nay, if the devil's in it," retorted Langley, "he has got it by him. Can you help me to a knowledge of his residence?"

"Somewhere in the Mint," said Myte. "But, to be serious, do you call the life you lead pleasure?"

"Why not? Ask Freeman. What do you say, Dick?"

"Toiling in a perpetual round," continued Myte, "running fruitlessly after happiness, when, if you stand still, you have it. I say, Wildgoose," he added, "did you ever see a kitten in pursuit of its own tail? Round and round goes the little devil, now on one haunch, then on the other, gravely kicking and grinning, and all for what? Why, if it sat still, there's its tail under its nose. Now, that's the 'moral' of a young fellow of pleasure."

"I take you," said Langley. "But did you ever see an old cat, sitting with its nose on a level with the knob of the poker? There it sits, winking and blinking—now a purr—now a sneeze—then a chasm of the mouth—then a cushion of a paw rubbed over face and ears—presently a long doze, and after that a long stretch, with an inverted semicircular back, and a hind leg stuck out, as though it wanted to get rid of it. Now, that's the 'moral' of an old fellow who thinks himself happy. Come—come; let me have the fifty pieces."

"If," exclaimed Myte, "you were to cut me into fifty pieces, and could make a little Daniel Myte out of every one

of them, and were to send all of them prancing about town to raise the money in my name, it would be of no avail. I tell you, you can't have it. I'll stand godfather to your extravagance no longer. What, if the old gentleman were to come to me, saying, 'Daniel Myte, Daniel Myte, why do you lend my son money, which is to be paid down on my coffin-plate?' What should I answer to that?"

"This," said the other—"'Everard Langley, Everard Langley, why have you not an eye to see your son's merit, and why don't you make him an allowance worthy of a man of his figure? If you did, Daniel Myte would keep his money, and your son wouldn't have to melt down your coffin-plate, which, if you don't mind, he'll be compelled to do.' That speech would go far to melt *him*, Daniel Myte. Are the ladies at home?"

"They are," answered Myte, "and I intend they shall remain so."

"Well," said the other, "I'll but pay my compliments to them, and be gone. Your servant, Myte; yours, Dick."

"When a man wears red-heeled shoes, and carries a cane at his wrist," observed Myte, after Langley was gone, "I give him up. I should like, Ricardo, to exercise the cane over the shoulders of such pretty fellows—fellows of fire, as they call themselves; I'd make 'em take to their red heels. A pity, too; the man's not without sense or spirit."

I should, probably, have forgotten this trivial talk long since, but that the critical time at which it took place has made it inseparable in my memory from the conversation that preceded and followed it.

"Would you oblige me now, sir," said I, "by telling me all you know about Mrs. Brett? I am quite curious," I added, with as much calmness as I could command, "to hear her history."

"I had forgotten Semiramis," cried Myte. "I wish she could be brought to forget me. Why, Ricardo, that woman, some years ago, was Countess of Macclesfield; ay, you may stare—a countess. Well, sir," and here he looked into my face some seconds before he resumed, "to what a pitch human assurance—shocking, hideous impudence—

may be carried, was only conjectured, nay, perhaps never imagined by mankind before, till she exemplified it!—what do you think that woman did?"

I was surprised and shocked, and answered nothing.

"What do you think she did?" he repeated in a measured tone. "Can you conjecture?"

"No, sir."

"No, sir," said Myte, assentingly, "and no sir ever could, of his own mind, or madam either. Some months before she brought her child into the world, she declared, voluntarily—with a voice like a human being, not a fiend, as it should have been—and with a face without a vizard, that her child, then unborn, was not the child of the Earl of Macclesfield, but of Earl Rivers."

"Earl Rivers!" I exclaimed, involuntarily, "what! the fine house in St. James's Square?"

"Yes, the fine house," said Myte; "he lived in a fine house; but he's lately gone to a house not nearly so fine, where he does *not* live."

"And was it the child of Earl Rivers, sir?—a boy?"

"Who was its father, and what its gender, I don't know," returned Myte; "but I beg her pardon—I believe she spoke the truth. A few months after the birth of the infant, the Earl of Macclesfield succeeded in getting a divorce—her fortune was returned to her, and she shortly after married Colonel Brett; and that's the end of my story. If you want to know more, Woful's your man." So saying, Myte betook himself to his own room.

It was a relief to me that he did so. Everything concurred, when my mind acquired sufficient serenity to enable me to compare and combine the several circumstances before me, to the conviction that I was that child. It must be so. I had seized my hat and was hurrying away to Ludlow, when it occurred to me that I had best unwind this ravelled skein myself. Ludlow and Lady Mason were in a plot, not against me alone, but against my mother. I did not reason why it should be so; or, rather, I did not labour that thought. I felt, at once, that no human motive could be assigned for such atrocity of

wickedness—and yet the suspicion arose again and again. Feelings that I had never before known began to stir within me. A mother—and such a mother! I was thinking of her beauty, then—her grace—her sweetness; but presently all that Myte had said returned to my memory. And what was there in his story? He was violently prejudiced against her; doubtless by Ludlow, the emissary of her relentless and persecuting mother, who had wrested me by force from her maternal arms. Grant the first shame—the wrong done to her husband—all else was noble. She might have imposed me—*me*—for Richard Freeman it was—upon her husband as his own child—she might have remained a countess, and retained her reputation. She loved him not; but she would not do him a dishonour, even though it should be known to herself only; rather than that, she had brought dishonour upon herself, to be known to the whole world.

I was tempted, when next I saw Myte, to put one or two further questions to him.

"Pray, sir," said I, "do you know what became of that child?"

"What child?" asked Myte. "Lord! how the booby stares! One of the children in the wood, or the babes in the Tower? 'That child!' Do you mean that child with two heads shown at Smithfield some years since? When one of its heads fell off by accident, the Merry Andrew picked it up and put it in his pocket, saying it was a serviceable trifle, and would be wanted again at Epping, next day."

"No, sir," I replied, "I meant the child of Mrs. Brett."

"You take a deep interest in Mrs. Brett," said Myte; "Brett and brat are alike indifferent to me, Ricardo. The child died."

My heart sank within me.

"Died, sir?—are you sure the child died?"

"Well," said Myte, with an oblique eye, "as I am neither a doctor nor an undertaker, I didn't help to kill or bury it. Ludlow told me, many years ago, that the child was dead."

"Do you remember, sir," I inquired, hesitatingly, "how many years it may be since the divorce of the Earl of Macclesfield from Mrs. Brett? I ask merely out of curiosity."

"So I suppose," returned Myte, "most questions have their origin in curiosity. But I do remember that. It was in the March of the year in which Aunt Judith died, who stood godmother to Vandal, and who, like many ladies who have nothing to do, interested herself greatly in what didn't concern her; for instance, this divorce, of which she was always chattering. 'Divorce!—divorce!—divorce!—oh, the shocking creature! Oh, the unhappy gentleman!' I thought she would have divorced my soul from my body. It was worse than James the Second and the Pope. I had had that so many years that I had grown callous. I do assure you, Ricardo, I couldn't feel her loss so acutely as I might have done, had this divorce never come to pass. So far, I owe Semiramis something."

"In what year was that, sir?" I inquired.

"In the year sixteen ninety-eight."

The very year! and they had told my mother I was dead, and she believed it. But we should be more than a match for them yet.

"Mrs. Brett lives in the neighbourhood, sir?" said I.

"Not a child's trot off," answered Myte; "I wish it were a giant's stretch. Hard by; just round the corner in the next street."

I awaited the approach of evening with the utmost anxiety. I would see her—I would discover myself to her, and baffle the plans with which Lady Mason and her worthy coadjutor were teeming. So entirely had a belief of Ludlow's treachery possessed me, that I utterly overlooked certain otherwise obvious circumstances of his conduct that might have inclined me to a contrary opinion. At present, it appeared to me that they had been putting me off with promises, in order to gain time for the concoction of a plausible falsehood, by which it was designed, not only to conceal from me the secret of my birth, but, by the inducement of bribery, to prevail upon some obscure person to own and claim me, and so shut the door against future

complaints and proceedings on my part. Two or three times I had resolved upon writing to my mother—endearing name! by which, in my earlier years, although conscious of its falsity, I had been taught to address, and as I now, for the first time knew, to honour the persecuting and intolerable Mrs. Freeman.

Nor did these tumults in any degree subside as the time drew near for presenting myself before her. A strong imagination supplied the deficiency of those feelings which only expand and mature under the sense of maternal love —of a mother's watchful care—of a parent's anxious protection; and when, at length, I left Myte's house, having habited myself in my best apparel, and proceeded towards the dwelling of Mrs. Brett, I believe I experienced at the time some such yearnings of the soul and palpitations of the heart, as a long-absent son may be supposed to feel, returning to a mother whom he had loved from his infancy, and whom, in his infancy, he had been taught, and had known cause, to love.

It was not, however, till I got to the door, that I bethought me of the probable effect so sudden and unlooked for a discovery must produce upon the delicate constitution of a woman. Here, again, my imagination was at work to magnify the consequences of my visit, and, perhaps, to palliate to myself the weakness that absolutely overwhelmed me, causing my fingers to withdraw from the knocker, and my feet to betake themselves to the other end of the street. During some hours, I wandered up and down on the other side of the way, looking wistfully at the house as I passed and repassed it, striving to extract resolution from the steadfast bricks and mortar, which each successive time looked more awfully prohibitory. Ought I to be ashamed to acknowledge that I went home that night as wise as I came, satisfying myself with excuses for my pusillanimity, which I had occasion to make use of on the next night, and on the next?

I saw her once in the course of these perambulations. She came for an instant to the window. Her back was to the light, so that I could not distinguish her face; but her

figure was not to be mistaken. Upon this occasion I was so agitated, that when I recovered myself, I resolved, and fortified my determination with an oath, that on the following evening I would make my way to her feet. I could no longer bear this state of suspense.

I was there at the accustomed time, at my old spot, opposite the house. Again I beheld her at the window. She was gorgeously attired—I conjectured for an assembly; and looked out, as though observing the night. Presently a footman opened the street-door, and ran to the corner. He was gone to engage a chair. No time was to be lost. He had left the door open. I crossed the way, and entered the house. Not a soul in the hall, or on the staircase. The door of the room was partially open. I glided in, how, I know not; nor did I approach her and throw myself at her feet, as I had intended; but I stood stock-still—no, not so: still, that is to say, silent, but trembling violently.

I think I must have looked wofully white, for when Mrs. Brett saw me, she uttered a half scream.

"Who are you, sir?" at length she said imperiously; "what do you want? You should have knocked before you entered the room. Were you admitted by the servants?"

I took courage, and approached.

"Ha! I see—Mr Myte's young man: what is your business here, young gentleman?"

I fell upon my knees before her.

"Bless me, madam."

"Bless you!" she exclaimed, with a laugh. "Bless *me*, boy! what is the meaning of this? Why do you apply to *me*? what can I do for you?"

"Bless me, madam!" I repeated. "You see before you your son—I am your son."

"You are a mad-brained boy, who deserve a whipping for your impertinence," she said, after a minute's pause, and she laid her hand upon the bell-rope. "Rise, you young fool, and go away; or my people shall take you where you will be well punished. This is one of your master's sorry jests—insolent old coxcomb! Rise——" stamping her feet.

I found my feet and my tongue too. The worst was over,

and I was not to be so repulsed. Snatching her hand, I said,—

"Nay, but hear me, madam; you must—you shall hear me. This is no jest—it is the truth. I am your son—the son you have so long believed dead."

Her lips were parted for a scornful laugh—her eyes dilated—her brows raised; and then she saw me—gazed at me—into me. An unmoved eye confronted hers. A sudden change—a change as ghastly as sudden. There was paint upon her cheeks and on her lips—the rest was ashy.

"Good God!—good God!" she exclaimed, not smoothing, but dashing the hair from my forehead—"it cannot be. Who are you?"—quickly—"you are Ludlow's nephew."

"Your son, madam," I replied, "your son, as there is truth in heaven. Lady Mason knows it. Ludlow can vouch for it, and shall be made to do so. Lord Rivers——"

I had scarcely uttered the name when she franticly flung me from her.

"Base, unheard-of imposture!" she cried, her eyes flashing as she spoke. "He shall answer it—Ludlow shall answer it, I say. Hence, at once, or I will alarm the house."

Again my eye caught hers, and again she scanned me, drawing herself up proudly. "Cunning, clever tool of an awkward journeyman," she said contemptuously. "If he knew how to use you; but he does not. You will cut his fingers, fellow—or I will."

"You do him wrong, madam," said I, hastily, "if you mean Ludlow. He knows not of my visit here; he is ignorant of it, and that I have made this discovery."

By this time, she had completely regained her self-possession. I watched her face. It was calm, cold, and malignant. She rang the bell violently, slowly nodding her head to me as she did so.

"We will make another discovery between us, young gentleman," she said; "we will discover whether my house is my own, or no." She heard feet upon the stairs. "Help! murder! thieves! Lucas! John! where are you?"

I cast myself at her feet. "For Heaven's sake, madam, if you will not own, do not endeavour to degrade me."

"Where are my servants?" she said, (what a hideous face it was at that moment!) addressing a little girl about twelve years of age, who ran into the room.

"I hear them coming, madam," answered the girl; "what is the matter?"

"A thief has broken into the house. Oh! you are come at last?" turning to two brawny rogues, as they entered. "Secure that young robber."

The fellows laid hold upon me, and began to pull me zealously about the room.

"Oh, madam!" interrupted the girl; "he is not a thief: I know he is not. He is a young gentleman. You did not mean to rob, did you, sir?"

"I am no thief," I cried, breaking from the men who held me, "and she," pointing to Mrs. Brett, "knows that I am not. She *shall* know that I am——"

"Silence him! away with him!" vociferated Mrs. Brett.

"Shall we give him to the watch, my lady?" said one, seizing me by the throat.

"Yes—no," she answered, "turn him out of the house. He will not repeat his visit, I dare say," she added, with a shocking smile.

"Do not hurt him, Thomas," cried the little girl; "you will strangle him."

"He's kicking my shins to splinters, Miss," remonstrated Thomas, dragging me, with the assistance of his fellow-servant, to the door.

What could I do against the well-fed villains who now forced me from the room with blind impetuosity, precipitating my head, as they did so, into the stomach of an old gentleman who had been listening on the landing.

"I beg pardon, Mr. Lucas," cried the more strenuous of the two, "we have got a thief."

"What! eh? what! what!" cried the old man, heaving and panting. "A thief! No such thing. He's Mr. Myte's youth. I've seen him there. A thief! He's nearly stolen all the breath out of my body, if that's being a thief; and I haven't much to lose. My lady is mistaken.

I must let her know who he is. Stay where you are;" and the old gentleman walked into the room.

"A pretty business, this," said one of the men to the other, as they waited for orders, wiping his perspiring face, "thief-catching must be hard bread."

"And keeping when you have caught," said the other, "that's all crust."

Lucas now came out of the room, closing the door after him. "Let him go quietly, now," he said. "You have terrified Mrs. Brett very much, young man," he added, turning to me; "but you won't do it again—eh? what! what!—no, you won't."

"They will treat me with more respect when I come a second time," said I, "and so will she—your mistress, and yours, fellows."

"Ay, ay, so they will," said the old man, patting my hand gently between his own. "You're no thief; no, no, no; but you robbed me—he! he! he!—of my breath; you did, you did; and now you're going to rob us of your company, ain't you? So, so, so."

And the old man led me down stairs, and tottered through the hall to the street door, which he opened.

"Hark'ee, young man," said he, first cautiously looking round, lest he should be overheard, "I shall see you again, eh?—soon, soon, soon; at Mr. Myte's; you've seen me there; yes, yes."

"Once, I believe I have, sir," I replied.

"You shall see me again, eh? again, again. I want to speak to you;" this he said confidentially, nodding his head. "Good night! eh? your hat's wrong end foremost; put it right—ah! that's right. We heard more than you thought for—I and Miss Elizabeth—in the next room, eh?—folding doors, with a wide opening. Walls have ears, and so have I; and little pitchers have long ears; eh? long ears—sharp ears. Mum—mum. Good bye—good bye."

So saying, the old man winked a watery eye, placed a shrivelled finger on the side of a peaked nose, and closed the door against me.

CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH A SCENE TAKES PLACE TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LIGHTLY PASSED OVER. WITH LUDLOW'S APPEARANCE IN A NEW CHARACTER.

I DARE say the reader, whoever he may be, will agree with me in the opinion that I followed a very foolish course, when, without ceremony or introduction, I intruded myself into the presence of my mother, and importunately and inopportunely claimed her blessing. But, let such reader reflect that I was profoundly ignorant of the art by which a mother's affections are to be come at—that I had no precedent whereby to direct myself—that, in short, my own feelings in the matter being factitious, suggested a line of action of a surprising and artificial character. Having reflected upon these points, he will then, perhaps, also agree with me, that the folly of my conduct was only to be determined by the result.

It was a folly, however, that as soon as I recovered the free exercise of my faculties, I made a solemn vow (but there was little occasion for that) never to repeat. The rough treatment I had met with at the hands of her menials had shaken all the tenderness out of my nature; and had Mrs. Brett ventured forth to her chair, which was waiting for her reception, while I lingered about the premises, I am not sure that I should not have whispered—it may be, hallooed—a word or two into her ear, that might have savoured less of sentiment than of revenge.

My rage must find vent somewhere; it was directed to Ludlow, who had been the cause of my disgrace. To him, therefore, I made all speed. I found him at home, deeply engaged over his lady's accounts.

"Well, Mr. Ludlow," said I, without needless preface, as I walked up to his table, "here am I again—once more in Lady Mason's house."

He looked up. "Good heavens!" he cried, "what's the

matter? You appear discomposed—your dress disordered—your face flushed. Have you been fighting?"

"Yes," I replied, "with a fury, and have had a mauling for my pains. I have been to see Mrs. Bellamy."

"Who's Mrs. Bellamy?" inquired Ludlow innocently.

"Oh! I thought you knew her—she has vast influence here. She has been called Countess of Macclesfield; afterwards, and for the second time, Mrs. Mason; now Mrs. Brett; ever, my mother—my excellent mother, Ludlow."

Ludlow sprang from his seat while I was saying this, overturning inkstand and account books.

"Who told you that?" gasping. "Gracious powers! how came you to know—a—a—a—seen her, did you say? how? where? what?"

"At her own house," I replied; "but why this terrible agitation?" for he fell back in his chair overpowered.

"Not at all—agitated," he said, with a grim smile, or rather, grin. "Well?"

"I went to crave her blessing—told her who I was—said that——"

"You did?" exclaimed Ludlow with a sort of scream; "how came you to know?—yes—well——"

"She repulsed me with scorn and indignation—rang for her fellows——"

"Kicked you—trod upon you—tried to murder you—" Ludlow broke in, and he jumped out of his chair, shouting, "It's out—out—all out. Now, Heaven have mercy upon every one of us, it's all out."

I thought he had gone distracted, and became alarmed. I seized him by the arm.

"But mind," he continued, hastily, "I did not tell you this. You can swear not a word passed these lips—you must swear that. By all the angels and saints in heaven, I never breathed a syllable—never would have breathed a syllable——"

There was a terrific knocking at the street door, succeeded by as violent a ringing of the bell. Up went Ludlow into the air.

"God of heaven!" he said, clasping his hands, "her

knock!—she's come; what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

He rushed to the door of the room, which he opened, and pulling the key with inconceivable swiftness from the outside, thrust it into the lock and fastened us in.

"Hush! hush!" he cried, listening at the door. "Where are you, Richard?" And he extended his hand behind him, as though feeling for me. I advanced—he gripped me by the arm. "Keep with me, Dick," he whispered—"do I tremble much?—not much, I think. Hush!"

The door was opened. A quick rustling of silks through the hall.

"Your mistress is in her own room?"

It was Mrs. Brett's voice; we heard her ascend the stairs rapidly.

"There'll be high words, presently," said he, looking back; "what if we get our hats, and make off—just for a walk, eh?"

"I'd not stir an inch for an empress," I replied, "I'm glad she's come."

"Are you?" he rejoined. "What a spirit you have! —So am I glad!—at least, I ought to be so. Whew! they're at it."

And so they were—rather, so was Mrs. Brett. Her voice was heard above, in what Ludlow called a "towering" passion, and a rapid footstep overhead told us she was pacing the room vehemently. Presently a loud alarum of the bell. A servant obeyed the summons. We heard the door open.

"Mr. Ludlow! Mr. Ludlow!"

The servant ran down in haste.

"You are wanted immediately, Mr. Ludlow," he said, knocking.

I opened the door, while Ludlow staggered back into a chair.

"You're wanted, it seems," turning to him.

"Coming, Nat; coming," said he, jerking his head backwards.

"Fetch up a good heart," said I, laying my hand upon

his shoulder. "What! afraid of an angry woman? One would think you had once had a scold for a wife."

Ludlow sprang upon his feet at this. He drew a long breath; plucked at his cravat, and laid out the cuffs of his sleeve.

"Go with me, Dick," he said; "stand by me. I shall want you."

"I mean to do so," I replied, drawing him on; "a dutiful son—ever anxious to attend his mother."

"That's right!—that's right!" returned Ludlow. "Here we go."

How I got him upstairs I know not. He hung back sadly as we approached the landing. The door was partially open. I drew him forwards.

"Will the man never come?" said Mrs. Brett, as we were about to enter. "I am in haste to go, and must not be kept all night. This delay, madam, might suffice to assure you that the fellow is a false and cowardly knave—willing, indeed, to play the villain, but weak in the execution of villainy."

On hearing this, regardless of Ludlow's objurgatory and yet pitiful face, which, during Mrs. Brett's speech, he had directed towards me, I took him under the arms and fairly thrust him into the room.

"Oh, you are come at last?" cried Mrs. Brett; "now, my good man, step forward, and let us hear the notable story that brain of thine has fashioned."

A painter should have seen the woman at that instant. She dazzled, almost daunted me. Lady Mason was dreadfully pale and agitated; her clasped hands upon her knees, her glance eagerly bent upon Ludlow. Her daughter stood by the side of her chair—her majestic figure drawn up to its full height. Her arms were crossed over her bosom, her fan playfully smiting her chin. Such scorn upon the beautiful lip! such indifference in the half-closed eyes! On my soul, I could have loved her then. I was proud of my mother.

"I must not hear my servant insulted," said Lady Mason; "his story is true—no recently invented tale. It is not

my fault, nor his, I dare to say it, that this secret has been discovered. Oh Anne! you have overborne me with a high hand; but it has come home to you at last."

"See!" cried Mrs. Brett, not heeding her, "what a sneaking hound it looks, with its puppy by its side. Art dumb, dolt? Open that frightful mouth, and speak thy speech, and make thy bow to thy mistress, and begone with thy creature."

"I am no creature, madam," said I, firing. "Whatever baseness belongs to me I derive from you."

"Ha!" she exclaimed, eyeing me with a pleasant smile; "well-schooled, madam. This nephew will make his uncle's fortune before he gets his neck in a halter."

"Speak out," said Lady Mason to the gasping Ludlow. "Tell this proud woman—convince her if you can, for I cannot, that she is mother of that boy."

Ludlow opened his mouth, and committed himself to speech, with a voice so loud as to startle all of us, himself of the number.

"Now!" he cried, "as God made me—as he is at this moment my witness—as he will one day be my judge, that boy, Mrs. Brett, is yours."

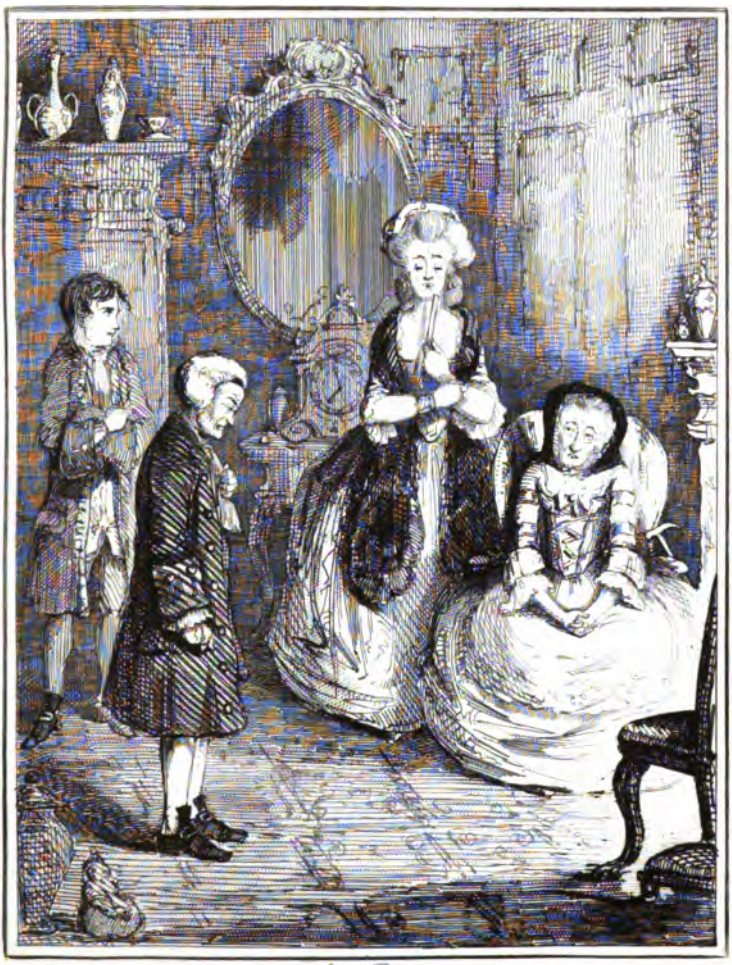
"Some human witness, good Mr. Ludlow; some mortal witness, worthy Mr. Ludlow, if it be not too troublesome a request," said Mrs. Brett.

Ludlow cast a glance towards her. I was surprised to observe it was not one of fear.

"Your ladyship," he said, turning to his mistress, "can testify that it was in obedience to your orders I delivered the infant to the care of Mrs. Freeman. It is for your ladyship to tell her—her—" pointing to Mrs. Brett, "why you thought it necessary to impose upon her the belief that the child was dead. Why you bound me by an oath never to reveal to the child who were its parents."

"True; all this is true," cried Lady Mason. "I will not tell you, Anne, why this imposition was practised."

"And why not?" said her daughter, hastily, "if there *was* an imposition. That there *is*," she added, "I need not that fellow's oath to the contrary to believe."



London: Bernard Bentley & Son, 1880

"Do you doubt me, too?" cried Lady Mason, reproachfully. "I say that I will tell you when we are alone."

"Leave the room, you two," said Mrs. Brett.

"Not now; I cannot tell you now."

"Strange relations, here!" exclaimed Mrs. Brett, with a scornful laugh. "I shall begin to doubt, madam, whether *you* are *my* mother. Credulous woman!" She seized Lady Mason by the shoulder. I thought she was going to shake her. "Credulous woman! that can permit this servant—this sorry rogue of yours, to overlay your easy brains with a figment borrowed—stolen from a grandam's book."

"It is all truth, very truth!" exclaimed Lady Mason, bursting into a passion of tears. "Leave me, I entreat. I cannot longer bear this."

"It is all truth," repeated Ludlow. "The orders of my mistress were exactly obeyed. Richard, I never told you this. No. Not even Mrs. Freeman, the woman who brought him up; my sister, my own sister, not even she, knew the parents of the child."

"Your sister?" said Mrs. Brett; "where is she? Let her be produced. Something may be made of her, if you have quite done with her, my good man."

"She is dead, madam," said Ludlow.

"*Her* child, by heaven!" exclaimed Mrs. Brett, quickly. "Oh, madam! do you not see through this? But, no; you are right; you cannot bear these scenes. Retire, or I will. The story will keep till to-morrow. We shall then decide whether this wretched rogue is to continue to enjoy your concurrence to his base imposture."

"No base imposture," said Ludlow. "Look upon him, madam; let the world see him, and decide whether he is not your son. His face bespeaks that he is. His spirit assures it. His spirit, madam, so like your own. Surely you will acknowledge him."

"Slave!" cried Mrs. Brett.

"I am sure you will," persisted Ludlow. "I know that you will love him. Oh, your ladyship," addressing his mistress, "before your good daughter leaves you, prevail upon her to take to her arms a son so worthy of her."

This speech from Ludlow! I was astonished; and turned to him for explanation. There was an expression in his face I had never seen before. He repeated his request; and then I detected a sneer beneath his words, and an insolent malice in his eye.

"Lady Mason," said Mrs. Brett, stepping shortly up to her, "your menial shall repent this indignity."

"Indignity!" cried Ludlow; "I did not mean——"

"Mean!" echoed Mrs. Brett. "Mean!—Mean wretch! I thought you had known me too well, years ago, to dare——"

"Oh, madam," interrupted Ludlow, "I knew you years ago, and know you now—too well, as you say."

"Ludlow!" cried Lady Mason, looking up, "you must not presume to insult my daughter."

"Oh! my lady, but he may," returned Mrs. Brett; "he has your warrant for it. But not with impunity," she added, suddenly approaching Ludlow, and striking him a violent blow upon the face with her fan.

Ludlow bore it without flinching; nay, not merely that, but he projected his face as though courting a second salute of the same nature.

"What is the meaning of this?" cried Mrs. Brett, humouring his conceit by bestowing upon him a second and a third blow with additional force, which he received in the same manner.

After a time he spoke, calmly and quietly.

"Madam, you remember Jane Barton?"

"Jane Barton?"

"Afterwards my wife."

"I do remember the creature," said Mrs. Brett. "Go on, sir. Well!"

"Well," said Ludlow, "well!"

"What does the fool mean?" cried Mrs. Brett, looking around. "Nephew," turning to me, "expound; this, I suppose, is another of your joint performances."

"I do not know what he means, madam," I replied; "and I cannot expound mysteries."

"Madam," resumed Ludlow, "since you remember her,

perhaps you have not forgotten Mr. Bennett—the gay, the handsome Mr. Bennett—your friend Mr. Bennett."

"I have not forgotten Mr. Bennett."

"I say 'well' again, then," cried Ludlow.

"Thank you, boy!" exclaimed Mrs. Brett, turning to me, and patting my head; "you are a very good boy; indeed, a very good boy. You would not second this branch of the lie. Madam," to her mother, "I hope you now see the gross web this poor thing has woven out of his worsted brains. And so, because his wife was young, and vain, and giddy, and he had neither sense nor spirit to control her; and because our friend Bennett (you know the whole story) was young and handsome—and fortunate," she added, with a provoking shake of the head at Ludlow, "has this fellow harboured a resentment against me, which he seeks to gratify by palming off his nephew upon me for my son. Begone, thou wretched animal! Out of my path, thou base and spiritless worm!"

Ludlow met her as she advanced, and grinned in her face. "Worm, am I?" he said. "How do you know I am a worm?—how do you judge I am a worm? How do you know a worm? By its shape—by its size—by its crawl? Ha! ha! you may be mistaken in your worm; perhaps, I am an adder—an adder. They are alike—but one stings."

"An adder be it, worthy Ludlow; what reptile you please," and she turned from him with a contemptuous smile. "And for you," taking me by the chin, "what shall we call *you?* Lambert Simnel? or shall it be Perkin Warbeck?"

I flung from her indignantly. "They, madam," said I, "aspired to a crown: you know best whether I propose much honour to myself by claiming *you* for my mother." That stung her. Conceal it she could not. "Nay, madam," I continued, "you shall not do yourself the indignity of striking me."

Her eyes spoke sufficiently plainly, but from her tongue not a word. She retired hastily from the room.

During this scene Lady Mason had raised herself in her chair, and was gazing at us by turns in a state of the extremest perplexity and alarm.

"Good Heaven! Mr. Ludlow!" she said, when her daughter was gone, "what am I to think of all this? This boy surely cannot be—come hither, Richard." She looked at me earnestly for some seconds, and then clasped me to her bosom. "Oh! no, no, no, there can be no mistake. He is, indeed, my daughter's son."

"What shall I swear by that he is?" said Ludlow; "is there need to swear? His face vouches for him. Oh, madam! on my knees let me beg you to pardon me that I intruded my own private wrongs into a cause so sacred as this—the establishment of Richard as the son of Mrs. Brett."

"What wrongs?" cried Lady Mason in surprise: "I never heard that she had wronged you. What wrongs?"

"They have lain here so long—thirteen years and more," returned Ludlow, striking his breast, "that I know not how to heave them out of my heart. Forgive me, madam; I will go below and recollect myself. You shall know all."

"Stay!" exclaimed Lady Mason; "how came this boy to know the secret of his birth?"

"I do not know," returned Ludlow; "not from me, I swear by all——"

"Do not swear," interrupted Lady Mason. "If you have broken your former oath, what avails one now?"

"Let me swear that I am not forsworn. But—no. Richard will do me that justice. To the letter I have obeyed you." So saying, with a low bow to his mistress, and a glance at me, as though inquiring what I thought of all that had passed, he left us together.

"There is something so strange in Mr. Ludlow's conduct," said Lady Mason, "that I cannot at all understand it. Tell me," taking me by the hand, "and I know you will tell me truly, did he impart to you this secret, which he was sworn—you know the awful obligation of an oath—never to divulge?"

"Upon my honour, madam, he did not," I replied. "Not a word passed his lips."

"How, then, did you discover it?"

"Madam," I said, "I will tell you all. It was only

natural that, from the first, when I first made this matter a portion of my thoughts, I should have concluded that I was, in some way, connected with you. Mr. Burridge, my tutor, confirmed me in that belief. When I was brought from school to London by Mr. Ludlow, as we passed through St. James's Square, he casually pointed out the house of Lord Rivers——"

Lady Mason started, a slight flush arose upon her cheek. "Go on."

"He told me it was the house of Lord Rivers, and that he was lately dead. I thought no more of that. It passed. You must remember, when I ran away from the shoemaker, and obtained an interview with you, that we were interrupted by Mrs. Brett. I observed your agitation—it was no less apparent in Ludlow. He evaded my questions as well as you yourself could wish. He told me she was a Mrs. Bellamy, and she was not, in the most distant degree, related to you. That also passed, but not so quickly. Think, madam, when I obtained this clue, how easy to arrive at the truth."

"But how did you obtain that clue?" said Lady Mason, hastily.

"I saw Mrs. Brett once again."

"You saw her once again? not here, surely?"

"Not here, madam; and then I learned who she was, that she *was* Mrs. Brett;—her whole sad history, shortly told. The very falsehood of Ludlow strengthened my conviction. Lord Rivers——"

"But where—but where was this?" cried Lady Mason, impatiently; "who furnished this clue?"

"Mr. Myte; from him I learned it."

"Mr. Myte!" cried Lady Mason, in the greatest surprise. "By what means did you become acquainted with him."

My surprise was equal to her own. "Do you not know, then, madam, that I am now, and have been for some weeks, living with that gentleman?"

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Lady Mason. "I thought you had returned to the shoemaker. Ludlow told me that he had prevailed upon you to do so."

"And he told me," said I, "that you had consented—nay, that you were delighted, that I should be placed with Mr. Myte; and, moreover, that you had faithfully promised that, within three months, I should be made acquainted with my birth."

"Then you did not return to the shoemaker, even for a day?"

"Not for an hour, madam, and I am sorry you should entertain so despicable an opinion of me as to imagine that I would. Lady Mason," I continued, "you are not well, and have already been too much excited. I reserve, therefore, what I have to say, and what I have to hear, touching your joint management of a mystery, which, thus suddenly revealed, has at once found and lost me a mother. Tell me but this, now. Did you purpose that I should never know my parents?"

"I cannot tell you," said Lady Mason. "Leave me, my good boy—leave me, I entreat. Send Ludlow up to me. He has, indeed, obeyed me *to the letter*. You have discovered that which, perhaps, had better been for ever unknown. It is not your fault. It is your fate."

I bowed distantly and withdrew.

When I got home, Myte rallied me, as he had done on several previous evenings, on my singular gravity, telling his daughters to "go hang," for that I was the captive of Semiramis. "When Ninus goes to 'Ninny's tomb,'" said he, "behold his successor. A spinster's doom, Goth, is thine. Vandal, thy portion is celibacy."

Goth blushed exceedingly at this raillery, whilst Vandal, her father's darling, laughed in hearty concert with the old fellow. Mrs. Myte preserved a staid and uncommon formality of aspect, and shortly took occasion to beckon her elder daughter out of the room. Vandal quickly followed. Myte fell asleep, and at last I retired to bed, after having minutely examined every lineament of his droll countenance, with an endeavour to ascertain how a sudden announcement of the discovery I had made would be likely to act upon it. I reserved a solution of that problem till the morrow.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH MR. MYTE IS PRESENTED WITH A PARTICULAR OCCASION OF SURPRISE, WITH HIS BEHAVIOUR THEREUPON.

SOME business out of doors pertaining to Myte engaged me the next morning. On my return, I discovered my master squeezed into a corner of the office, earnestly intent upon the perusal of a letter, which he shifted from one hand to the other in rapid alternation; his lips, at intervals, in motion; his eyes at like times upraised, as though invoking a blessing upon himself, or a curse upon others. He did not see me for some minutes; but when he did, he regarded me with a comical wildness of aspect.

"Ricardo," he said, "be pleased to satisfy me as to whether I am standing on my head or my heels. My strong impression is that I am, at this present speaking, erect upon the former. If it should be so—carefully lay hold upon me by the ankles, and set me properly on end."

I expressed a hope that nothing had occurred seriously to discompose him.

"There is a letter," he replied, tossing it into the air, "that would disturb the equanimity of Cadmus himself—words written with a flash of lightning, dipped in thunder, and yet as plain as a proclamation."

"What is its import, sir?" I inquired.

"Import!" echoed Myte, "it imports no good to you, I can assure you. Here, this is a letter," and he took it from the ground, and held it before him upside down, "from Mrs. Brett, who tells me that you burst abruptly into her room, last evening, head hindmost; and that you attempted to frighten her with your tongue in your cheek, and to rob her with your hands in your pockets, and to murder her with the handle of an oyster-knife, and all that; and, moreover, that you will be telling me a long story—(I hope it won't be very long)—to which I am not to listen, although I have a pair of ears; and that I am

to kick you out of doors, which I won't do, although I have a couple of feet."

"Really, sir," said I, "I do not precisely know what this means. That I did wait upon Mrs. Brett——"

"That's what I want to know about," said Myte, kindly, taking me by the hands. "Come, what is it? Why did you call upon the Assyrian queen? She says, you burst into her apartment; that you greatly alarmed her; and that, had she not called her servants to her assistance, she knows not but you might have robbed or murdered her. This is her tale of the Bear and Fiddle; now, let us see you make Bruin dance to a different tune."

"She does not tell you, then, sir," I asked, "that I subsequently saw her at her mother's house, and that a long explanation ensued?"

"Not a word about that," answered Myte. "I hope you have not been killing and rifling the old lady?"

Upon this I told him all, as concisely and clearly as his frequent interruptions enabled me to do so—these consisting of "Ohs"—"Ahs"—"Have at you there, my lady!"—"Stop there!"—"Go on!"—"Hilloah!"—"Snip-snap!" and expansions and elongations of face out of number.

"Well, now," he said, bustling about me when I had concluded, "what do you mean to do? what will you call yourself? who are you? what's your name?"

"Richard Savage—my father's name."

"Savage!" cried Myte, "a bad name that. Savage! better fitted to fight than to melt a dragon with. I'll tell you what; you shall stay with me. You shall be my Friday—*my* Savage. You've read Robinson Crusoe? Daniel De Foe—I know him. You will be safe here. As for Woful, he must paddle his own canoe;—if he goes down we can't help it. Poor Jeremiah! but his face will scare the sharks, that's one thing, and some friendly dolphin will perhaps lend him a back."

I expressed my determination to stand by Ludlow to the last.

Myte shrugged his shoulders. "Well," said he, "when a man's out of breath, a post is a serviceable thing to lean

against; but, the worst of it is, it won't help a man on his way. You are sure," he added with a questioning eye and his finger in his ear, "you are sure, you are not Woful's nephew? No—just her turn of face—with a difference in the eye and the lip. I'll tell you what, Ricardo, Semiramis would think it a mere trifle to carbonado my little carcass—but she owes me money; and, until she can close my hand, she dare not open her mouth. Besides, what care I for her, or, indeed, for any one? This is not Turkey, where a fellow's head's off long before he knows why; or his soul's shot out of his body with a bow-string long before he knows wherefore. Come up stairs, and let me discourse marvels to the feminine race. How their pretty ears will tingle!—how their pretty peepers will blink!—how their pretty mouths will open, when I tell them whom we have got amongst us. Bolt the door, lest the thieves shouldn't be honest, or the honest men should turn rogues while we're absent;" and he led the way up stairs.

"Gather round me, good people!" exclaimed Myte, rushing into the room, and not at the moment remarking that his elder daughter was absent, and that his wife and Vandal had retreated, on his entrance, to the other end of the apartment in seeming dismay—"gather round me, and let me communicate miraculous tidings. Savage, step forth," with a Betterton elevation of voice; a self-styled imitation of whom he frequently presented.

Mrs. Myte gave her daughter a jog with the elbow.

"Go to him, my dear—go to him," she said, "you can do any thing with him."

Mistress Martha accordingly came forward slowly, and laying her head coaxingly upon her father's shoulder, and stooping her delicate little figure so as to assimilate to the old man's stature, shook her head, and gazed bewitchingly in his face.

"Go—go, you young wheedler," cried Myte, "I can't hear any thing now. It is for me to speak this tide, and for you to listen."

"My dearest papa!" said Margaret; "only hear me for a moment. We are sure, when you know all——"

"Ha!" cried Myte, "what's this?" and he started back. "How? You got something to tell also? Flusterina, what are you going to cry about? Howl! howl! howl! howl! as old Lear says. Where's Goth?"

So saying, he sprang round and encountered Mr. Langley, who with extended hand came, just then, into the room.

"Who sent for you, with that shocking long countenance?" exclaimed Myte. "That violin face portends a tune of dismal discord. Where's my Goth, I say? if it should be as I suspect——"

"Oh! Mr. Myte!" said his wife, "hear what the young gentleman has to say, before you condemn him."

"Well, young gentleman, what have you to say before I condemn you?" said Myte. "Guilty, or not guilty, to an unknown indictment? What is the indictment, Vandal? What a vengeance! Not a word? You are clerk of the court."

"My dear *multum in parvo*," said Langley, "lend me your ear."

"Both," answered Myte, "when I have heard you. Only, mind you return them shortly; for I find them, at times, useful."

Encouraged by this nonsense of the other, which betokened that, whatever he had to communicate, would not be very harshly received, Langley took heart.

"You must have long since seen, my dear sir, my passion for your lovely daughter."

"Your passion for my daughter!" echoed Myte. "Indeed, but that is one of the things that I had not long since, or even lately, seen. Have you, ladies, seen any thing of what Wildgoose calls his passion? But which of my lovely daughters do you mean? Are they not both lovely? Have you seen it, Ricardo?"

"I have," said I, smiling.

"Then, why had you not called to me, and let me have a sight? I'll tell you what, Wildgoose, you must distribute your passion, as you term it, in small portions amongst the married men of your acquaintance, to be carried to their wives, by way of rarity."

"My passion," urged Langley, "is not to be distributed; nay, it cannot be diminished. Don't you remember what Butler makes Hudibras say?"

"Why, he makes him say a great many more good things than you and I will ever say. Out with it. What is it?"

"To a similar requisition to that you so unreasonably made to me," said Langley,—

> "'Quoth he, to bid me not to love
> Is to forbid my pulse to move,
> My beard to grow, my ears to prick up,
> Or, when I'm in a fit, to hickup.'

That clinches the argument. Now what, my dear Multum, have you to urge against me? Here I am—a man of good family—of great expectations—of——"

"Of figure not contemptible—of reputation so-so, as the world goes," said Myte. "I know all that. But tell me, young fellow, is not your father a baronet, and am I not a plain old fellow? (Good Lord deliver us! if he knew what *my* father was!) and will he not, should I encourage your *passion*, and send you to church to get married, come to me, saying with a high-bred face, and a voice like the click of a pistol—'Why did you countenance the match? Why did you permit the match? Why did you make the match? Why hadn't you forbidden the match? And here I am at your service—*your* match!' Then will he take me to the back of Montague House, and blow out these poor paltry old brains of mine, telling me to go and match them. Oh! hang your match! I shall be blown up with your match! Thank'e, good Guy Fawkes—none of your matches for me."

"To prevent that," said Langley, "for we know the delicacy of your scruples—and that the old gentleman shall not have so much to say, for which, if you knew the state of his lungs, you would commend my considerateness—Mistress Martha and I have already contracted that match. Allow me to bring her to you to crave your blessing."

"Married!" exclaimed Myte, "and no consent asked till it's too late to say 'No;' a father's highest privilege, and

sometimes his greatest luxury—here goes!" and he took to his heels, and ran out of the room.

"Follow him, dear Martha," cried Mrs. Myte, alarmed, "he'll do something rash—I'm sure he will. I've heard the best do one rash thing in their lives."

"Stay, my dear," said Langley, detaining Martha; "there's no occasion to follow him, I assure you. It's all right, I can see that. Let him alone."

Myte presently entered, bearing in his hand an unsheathed rapier, not much longer than a skewer.

"Look'e, Wildgoose," said he, "I did think of boring a hole through your body, but to turn my house into a lachrymatory would answer no good purpose. Besides, I'd as lief live with crocodiles, if they'd let me, as with howling women. Dear me! bring me thy wife; and for the baronet, if he doesn't like it, take her to him; and if he doesn't love her when he has seen her, his eyes are no better than his heart, though they may be twice as large."

With these words, he relinquished to my hands the sword, and having contentedly received a rapturous kiss from his wife, was led to a chair.

Langley tripped out in haste, and brought in his bride.

"Thou rascal!" cried Myte, shaking his head at the blushing and trembling girl; "what dost thou expect?"

"Your blessing, sir," said Langley, approaching with her; and down upon their knees the two dropped midway between Myte and his wife.

"And is that all you expect?" said Myte. "Curses and hard crusts ought not to go together, ought they, madam?" winking at his wife; "and so, we will give her our blessing, if she will be satisfied with hard crusts. Love goes a great way—a great way—especially from sorry fare. Vandal, you shall have all the money, and this headstrong girl shall have our blessing. Rise, and give me a kiss."

"I dare say," resumed Myte, when his wife and daughter had somewhat recovered their composure—"I dare say, Wildgoose, you can find some young fellow to take this other girl off our hands. We are not mightily particular,

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after you. We shan't turn away a lord, unless he happen to be very rich, indeed."

"Indeed, my dear papa, I mean never to marry," cried Vandal.

"Ho! ho! is it so?" exclaimed Myte, "then I must keep a wary eye upon you. You are sure, madam," turning to his wife, "there's no tall spark in any of the closets or cupboards? If there be, let him come forth, and away with her. What, then, will you stay with us, and comfort our old age, and be a good and obedient girl, and never think of the men-folk?"

"That I will," said the girl heartily, "only you must promise to love my sister as well as before."

"So I will," replied Myte, "if that husband of hers will promise never to love her less."

"No fear of that," said Langley; "it shall be the study of my life to make her happy."

"You may carry off all the honours without studying very deeply that branch of science," cried Myte: "there are very few graduates in Hymen's university. But, what! do you think we are going to furnish forth a marriage table for you? Flusterina, have you made any preparations for a banquet?"

"Mrs. Myte, at my desire, has not," said Langley: "I wish you to see my new apartments. I think you will approve them. Every thing is in readiness for your reception."

"Have with you, then," cried Myte. "We will see you fairly on your journey."

"And Freeman shall be of the party," cried Langley.

I excused myself earnestly on the plea of particular business with Ludlow, whom I had engaged to meet in the evening.

"Ha! there," exclaimed Myte, "if I hadn't well nigh forgot all about Freeman. His name's not Freeman, but Savage. He is now, good people, Richard Savage, son of the late Earl Rivers and the present Mrs. Brett."

And Myte, hereupon, entered into a detailed account of my history.

The ladies, after their curiosity had been amply gratified, severally, and with great warmth, congratulated me on my good fortune.

"Nay," said Myte, "Ricardo's coat-of-arms may be good enough, and I am not going to pick a hole in it; but I don't know that we have much occasion to congratulate him. Here's Langley knows the lady well. What do you say? Is he to laugh or cry—are we to be glad or sorry?"

"She will hardly be brought to acknowledge you, Dick," said Langley: "there is not a prouder woman in England than Mrs. Brett; and, for my part, I think her mother and the steward have contrived—innocently, perhaps—to give a warrant for her hostility towards you, which, indeed, if all I have heard of her be true, she scarcely requires, but of which, I fear, she will avail herself. I know those, however, who have great interest with her, and they shall be moved in your behalf. The colonel, too, is not a bad man; and if we could only get him to stir in the matter—for he is one of the most indolent and careless of men—I believe he could influence her, even to a good purpose."

"He must be a moral Hercules who could do that," cried Myte, "and the colonel has no passion for laborious efforts. How that man got a reputation for the possession of good parts is a marvel to me, Wildgoose."

"Nay," said Langley, "I believe he has abilities. Steele has a high opinion of him. It may truly be said of him that he has hidden his talent under a bushel."

"May it?" returned Myte. "I believe it may truly be said he has hidden the bushel also, for nobody ever saw it; unless you mean he has kept his talent in his head, which is as large as a bushel. His wisdom was not very manifest when he married his wife. Where are the womenkind?"

"They are gone to dress," said Langley. "Some thought the colonel a wise man in that instance, sir; consider her fortune—it *was* very considerable."

"Consider the lady that went with it," cried Myte.

"I believe he was very poor," said Langley.

"So poor," returned Myte, "that Cibber lent him a

clean shirt to propose marriage in. I would rather have married Cibber's washerwoman."

"Let us suppose he was in love, Multum; she was a very fine woman, and I believe the colonel thought her a *rara avis*."

"Many a man," said Myte, "thinks he has secured a black swan, and finds afterwards that he has chosen a begrimed goose."

"Hang it, she is no goose neither," said Langley, laughing. "But, soft. We forget we are speaking of Dick's mother."

"Gadso, that's true," cried Myte. "He'll be calling us to an account. Spare my grey hairs, Ricardo; I'm old and garrulous; and turn your wrath against him. But you must come with us. Woful has no claim or title to you; and, on my word, had he been your worst enemy, he could not more effectively have injured you with Semiramis."

"It is because I begin to suspect as much," I said, "that I am above all things anxious that every part of this business should be cleared up. Besides, sir, I fear I should be but a dull guest at your happy board."

"Well, what say you, Wildgoose?" said Myte. "We must not have a death's head at our table; and if Woful has been playing a false game, the sooner the cards are snatched out of his hand the better; and so we must do without the lad."

It was a relief to me to be spared from the intended festivities, to which Myte departed with all the eager alacrity of a child. In the evening I called upon Ludlow.

I had hoped that, when I got home, Myte and his family either would not have returned, or that they would have retired to bed. I was partly mistaken.

"Ricardo!" cried the voice of Myte from within, as I passed the closed door of the sitting-room, "come hither, thou mistletoe on the genealogical tree."

I opened the door, and entered. Myte was seated by himself, divested of shoes, cravat, and wig; his knees unbuckled, his eyes in a haze; a pleasant smile upon his mouth, and a hand upon his chin. He was fuddled.

Finding that he did not speak, after a few moments I approached, and inquired whether I should assist him to bed.

"I have been to good dinners," said he, at length; "but never was I at such a dinner. I have drunk good wine; but never such wine. I have met choice spirits; but never such spirits. Ricardo," he continued, rubbing his ear, "I have heard Nicolini and Mrs. Tofts; but they screeched—oh! bird of wisdom! how they did screech, compared to the nightingales I have heard this night. 'Tootle-too,' cries the flute. 'Have with you,' says the fiddle. 'And me too,' goes the hautboy. Heads wagging, bows and courtesies, swan-sailing, ghost-gliding, ducking and diving, tiptoe-striding; and all because Goth has married a baronet's son."

"Mr. Myte, *are* you coming to bed this night?" cried the voice of his spouse from above. "Mr. Freeman, be so good as to bring him up stairs."

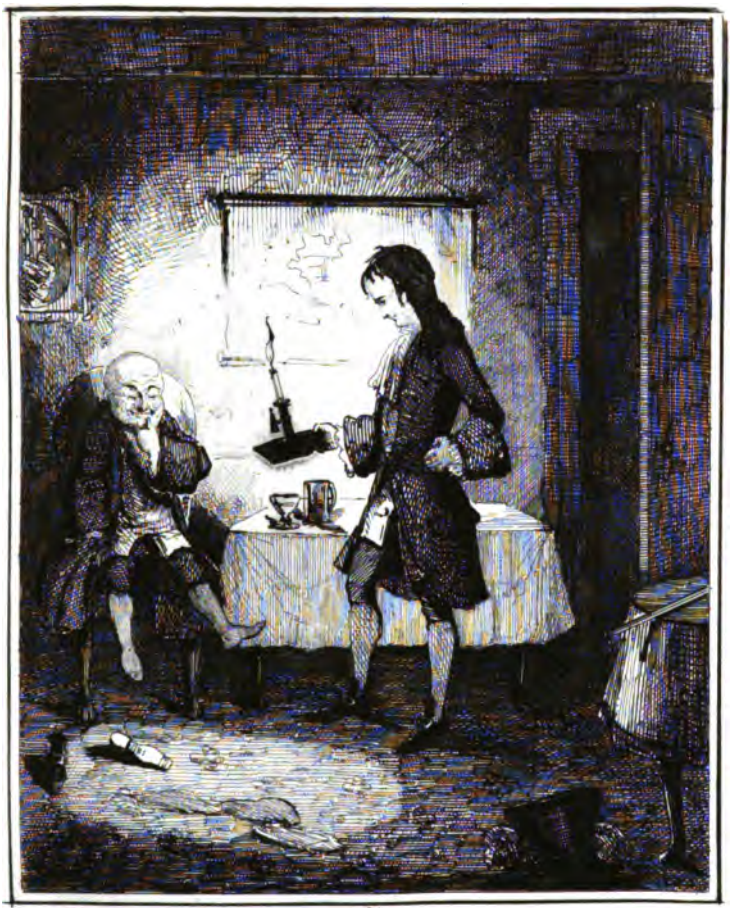
"I come," said Myte, rising with some difficulty. "Savage is your name, not Freeman," turning to me. "That name, though, is a good one to any body who wants a good name—and who does not? I'll have it, and marry again; and leave Flusterina to the willow-trees. We have been talking of you, Ricardo, and to good purpose. Semiramis must succumb."

"Permit me, dear sir, to help you up stairs," said I, for I heard Mrs. Myte fidgeting and fuming on the landing.

"Vandal will go soon," said he, with a wise look in my face. "The fellows sharpened their eyes upon her, as Job says. Poor Job! He had a wife. Vandal will be taken from me, and then desolation to this household." Here he affected to whimper. "Never mind," he added, "perhaps, in a few years we shall see little toodles waddling about this room, as grave as though they knew they were one day to be drawn out into men and women."

This contemplation was so pleasing, that he remained in it for a considerable time, heedless of Mrs. Myte's importunities and of my endeavours to second them.

"Blessed bawlers!" he exclaimed at length, with a farewell wave of the hand, as though the creatures of his



Mr. Mayte on his stairs from the Wedding dinner.

London Richard Bentley & Son 1896

imagination had just waddled, or were then waddling, through the opposite wall, and he turned out of the room. He favoured me with a frisk as I left him at his own door.

CHAPTER VIII.

RICHARD SAVAGE WAITS UPON A CERTAIN COLONEL. HIS RECEPTION, AND IN WHOSE PRESENCE.

On the next morning, I sat me down, and addressed a long letter to Mrs. Brett, in which I related, in full, the history of my life—how I was brought up by Mrs. Freeman—how I was sent to school by Lady Mason—my withdrawal thence—my ten days' sojourn at the shoemaker's—nothing was forgotten or omitted. In conclusion, I implored her, for her own sake as well as for mine, to acknowledge me without delay, and without reservation, too; since I would not be satisfied (I told her so) with less than an entire, open, world-wide recognition of my claims. At the same time, I conceded thus much; that if the maternal eye were likely to feel sore at my constant or occasional presence, an allowance, such as might befit my birth and rank, would at once satisfy me, and relieve her of my society.

The letter was a strong one—a prudent man might, haply, say that it was too strong.

Strong as my letter was, however, it was not strong enough to bring back an answer. Nor was a second or a third more successful. I heard, indeed, from Myte, that Mrs. Brett had issued a second command to him to get rid of me. She asserted, that I was an impudent impostor, set in motion by Ludlow, who was my uncle; and she put it to Myte's discretion whether he would continue to harbour a young knave, an implied encouragement of whom would generate a suspicion that he favoured the fraud, and proposed to participate the expected profits from it. This insinuation stung Myte not a little.

"Wildgoose is zealous in your behalf," he said one day, "and has set some of his friends to sound Semiramis

about you; but who can fathom in a rough sea? She will have it, you must pack. Now, I don't like that. What would you do, Ricardo; you know? Jeremiah is no uncle of yours, it seems; and has no reason to love you for your mother's sake; and, as to her, when you obtain money from her, I shall expect the man in the moon to mint guineas, and fling them down to us, and shall look to see bat-fowlers abroad to catch them in cobwebs. I don't care this," he added, showing a little bit of his thumb, "for her talk about my taking a portion of the plunder.—

> 'Truepenny was a worthy soul,
> He might have had half, but he wanted the whole.'

If Truepenny got nothing, whose fault but Truepenny's? Are you assured of Woful's honesty?"

"Perfectly," I replied; "and so, I hope, sir, are you. To do Mrs. Brett a little charity, pray do not do him a great injustice."

"Heigho!" sighed Myte; "charity begins at home. She'll take the bread out of my mouth, that'll be the end of it; and I shall be compelled to sell my woodcocks to buy a stick to trudge through the world with." (He called his collection of wretchedly-carved heads his woodcocks.)

This was said jestingly; but I suspected there was a little seriousness at the bottom of it. However, I did not openly remark upon it at the time.

I went to see Ludlow frequently. One evening, about three weeks after the grand discovery, I met him on the steps of Lady Mason's house. He was going, he said, to make a call in the neighbourhood. As we walked along he told me that Lady Mason remained very sullen, and that she appeared to brood over the recent event; that Mrs. Brett called upon her very often; and that after these visits she grew more and more morose and taciturn.

"Silence is a bad thing," said Ludlow, "when it is long kept up. There is too much talking after it."

"Has she given you any reason to believe that Mrs. Brett intends to recognise me?" I inquired. "Do you think I may expect her good offices?"

"I don't know," replied Ludlow. "She has said nothing —which says too much. But you will have your own way. I tell you, nothing less than threats will serve, threats put in execution. Have you yet decided upon applying to Colonel Brett?"

"I have; and I will do so."

"How does Myte behave? Has he learned what the world calls prudence?"

"I see no material change," I replied; "perhaps, he is not so very friendly and familiar as before."

"My mother used to say," remarked Ludlow, "porridge will cool of itself, if you give it time—it needs not cold breath."

"Do not be too hasty to judge him," said I. "My mother's cunning might deceive——"

"A better and a worse man than Myte," cried Ludlow. "Good as he is, he would rather run up a hill after a fox, than down hill after a falling child. That is another old saying. I remember these things now."

He halted at the door of a decent house.

"Will you wait for me a few minutes here?" he said— "I have something to tell you."

He returned in a short time.

"Do you think me a fool?" he said. "I have been doing a very extraordinary thing lately."

"And pray what is that?" I asked, smiling.

"You laugh, Dick," he replied, "as much as to say, 'When do you other than foolish things?' You must know," he added, after a pause, "that since all has been brought to light, my mind has been much troubled; there has been a mixture of joy and pain; and I am a weak fellow, and cannot bear either joy or pain in excess. Well, finding the house uncomfortable—my lady not as she used to be—the servants wondering, and applying to me with their eyes for a satisfaction of their curiosity, I took to walking abroad of an evening. On one of these evenings —let me speak out at once—on the second evening after the scene upstairs—I saw *her*——"

"Whom?" said I, interrupting him.

"My wife," he replied, "Jane Barton—Jane—Ludlow. Richard," he resumed, pressing my arm, as if to forestall any expostulation I might design to offer, "no human eye ever beheld such an object. So worn—wasted—emaciated. Richard, she asked alms—charity; she was starving: I could see that she was starving. She will die," he said quickly. "She will die—I know that—soon. I shall not—I cannot tell you what followed. Am I a stone? I took this lodging for her—she is taken care of. She shall be, till—she dies. I have been to see her. Dick, if I could recall the past—if she were innocent, and you righted—I could die happy now—this moment: and she should close my eyes. Oh! holy God! thy wisdom is not our wisdom; nor are thy way our ways. Else, I could ask—but no. All will come round at last."

When I could speak I applauded his humanity.

"You have had a doctor to her, I suppose?" I inquired.

"I have," he said. "The people of the house are good souls and recommended their own doctor—a worthy man, they tell me. *They* have no hope of her. Gracious God! what a life to have led! Crime and its punishment—both together. Well; what now?—forgiveness, forgiveness:—Oh! let us be human—let us be human, Dick. Eh? what a precious thing man is, to take upon himself airs, and think to anticipate the Almighty, who may, perhaps (I trust so), judge reversely."

"I cannot speak to this," said I; "your own feelings——"

"True," said he, "you cannot speak to this. You are young; and youth is, mostly, for virtue. But charity—forgive me, dear Richard, comes after time—after years and tears. And virtue! I know not what it is, if it be not charity."

"You are moved," I said, for his eyes were streaming. "You must not think too much of this. You have done well."

"I hope so," he replied; "and I am glad you approve what I have done."

Having taken leave of my friend, I went straightways

home, and indited a letter to Colonel Brett. It contained a mild recapitulation of the points urged in my former epistles to my mother. The constitutional indolence ascribed to the colonel by Langley was shaken off by him upon this occasion, for on the following morning I received an answer to this effect; indeed, I think I may say, in these words:—

"I have heard of your insolence to Mrs. Brett, and of the shameful imposition you have been put upon attempting to practise. You appear a clever boy, and I could wish to see your parts turned to worthier account. Beware, child, of Bridewell and the whipping-post, which inevitably await you, if you trouble me further. My servants have orders to take you before the justice if you are seen loitering about my house."

Incensed as I was at the receipt of this brief missive, I was, nevertheless, sufficiently master of myself to determine to abstain from the colonel's house. I was not prepared for justiciary proceedings at this stage of my suit. I hastened, therefore, to take counsel of Ludlow.

Upon inquiring for him, the servant told me he was upstairs with his lady, and that he did not know when I should be able to see him.

"I will wait," said I, stepping into his room.

"Oh, sir!" said Nat, following me; "you are Mr. Ludlow's nephew, I believe. I fear there is sad work upstairs."

"Of what nature?" I inquired.

"Quarrelling, and I don't know what," said Nat. "Mr. Ludlow has been down stairs once, and took up his books, all in a hurry. Oh! here he comes again."

Ludlow entered wildly, "You here?" he cried—"what do you want? I must leave you," looking after something. "You shan't stay another minute in my house! Ho! ho! It's come to this at last. Dick, I will see you in an hour—at Myte's. I shall then have plenty of leisure—plenty of leisure then, Dick."

"One moment," said I, detaining him, as he was hurrying away—"look at this letter, and tell me what you think of it," handing him the colonel's communication.

He read it hastily. "Like them all," he cried, folding it and returning it to me. "Keep that as a remembrance —for love. He is one of the family, RICHARD SAVAGE," elevating his voice, "and as one of the family he shall rue this insolence. Let me see; I will contrive to talk with Lucas; but I can't do it now. Don't you know I am wanted above? Lord bless you! I am a servant and must obey. Go—in an hour at Myte's."

"Can't you tell me where I should be likely to hit upon this colonel?" said I. "I want to see him."

"You do?" cried Ludlow; "brave dog! nothing daunts you. Oh! that spirit of yours will keep us all alive, till you frighten some of our souls out of our bodies—some—not mine. Where is he to be hit upon? ay, at Button's coffee-house, in Covent Garden. You will find him there, I dare say. Be very soft, and humble, and respectful. He's a very high gentleman. I wish you were old enough to carry a sword—you'd use it, wouldn't you? I must be gone." So saying, he snatched up a book of accounts and hastened away.

It was a practice with me, from my infancy, when any thing arduous or unpleasant was to be done, to do it at once. I confess, I felt my spirits a little ruffled when I reflected upon the probable result of an encounter with Colonel Brett. His letter was one of those performances which indicate an off-hand, cavalier practice in the disposal of business; and the disparity of our years and station was such as to hold out small hope of success on my side, either as a peaceful negotiator, or as a hostile adversary. Notwithstanding, never having feared the face of man since I could look up to it without a crick in my neck, I put by every suggestion of weakness or timidity, and made all speed to Button's.

"The colonel is here, for a wonder," said the waiter, in answer to my inquiry; "this is not his usual time. He is engaged with Mr. Steele at the further end of the room. Shall I take him your business, or your name?"

"My name is Savage," said I; "be pleased to inform the colonel I will await his leisure."

I snatched the moment's opportunity afforded me, to observe the gentleman to whom the waiter directed his steps, and who was Colonel Brett. He was a fine, tall, gallant figure of a man, very showily dressed. Indolently reclining in a chair, he was listening intently, looking through his spread fingers which were placed upon his forehead and temples, to his friend Steele, the celebrated Richard, shortly afterwards Sir Richard Steele. This personage was likewise gaudily dressed. He was inclining to corpulency —with the face of a farmer, the eye of a hawk, and the smile of an angel; and was talking with much animation, at intervals tossing one side of his black, full-bottomed periwig from his shoulder, and tapping the hilt of the colonel's sword with a point of his small three-cornered hat.

The colonel started, and raised himself in his chair when the waiter delivered my message. He pondered for an instant, and waved his hand. "Let him wait," he said; "but, no," rising.—"One moment, and I will be with you," nodding to Steele.

By this time, I had advanced half-way up the room. The colonel approached, and, taking me by the shoulder, turned me round, and half leaning upon me, as he did so, pushed me forward into a recess of one of the windows.

"Now, young man," said he, confronting me, "I must be short with you, I perceive. What brings you here? I should have imagined that the billet I sent you would have —what shall I say? a—a——"

"Frightened me?" said I. "Oh, no, sir; I am not to be frightened by letters any more than yourself, or my mother."

"Your mother!" cried the colonel, now for the first time looking at me. "What a prodigious front, child, thou must —eh?" The colonel looked a long while before he again spoke. "You are an impostor," he said, at length, abruptly, "and your object, avowedly so, is to extort money."

"I am sorry to be obliged to tell you that you are saying what is not the truth," I returned. "I am no impostor— nor do I wish to *extort* money. I am very young, Colonel Brett, as you perceive; and I have no friend or protector. You must pardon me, therefore, for speaking that of

myself, which I have no one to say for me. My mother knows that I am her son, and I intend that she shall not keep that knowledge to herself."

"Hah!" cried the colonel. He raised his hand, as though about to seize me by the collar, while his eye wandered about in quest of the waiter.

"Nay, sir," said I loudly, "I must not suffer any insult at your hands; I will not bear it." I believe that my colour rose as I added, "To a gentleman of your figure it may be hardly necessary to say that such conduct would better befit a blusterer than a man of honour."

"Plague on't, child!" exclaimed the colonel, "what wouldst have? Dost want to fight me? Where is thy sword? Thou should'st get one."

"So I was told half an hour ago," I replied; "I find it may be necessary."

Mr. Steele arose at this, and came towards us. "Why, colonel," he said, "what young Hector have you got here?"

"A myrmidon-mauler, indeed, as Frank used to say," replied the colonel; "pardon me, I'm at your service in one minute," motioning to Steele to resume his seat. "Let us make an end of this," he said, turning to me. "You want money, it seems; and have fallen upon these means of getting it. How much? Let me know the extent of your impudence or your modesty."

"What I want is best seen in my letters to my mother and to yourself. I hope you do not mean to give me room to suspect that the money is the chief difficulty? Let me tell you, colonel, you may wilfully blind your eyes, but the eyes of the world shall be opened."

"That a young man of your years should talk thus—should dare to talk thus," said the colonel, reddening, "is incredible—amazing. Why, thou young coxcomb, I tell thee thou hast not a leg to stand upon. Thy story is the most preposterous—the most extravagant—the most——"

"It admits of proof, too," said I, cutting short his superlatives. "You wonder, you say, that I should talk to you as I do. Ascribe it to my resentment of the treatment I am receiving—not to my barefacedness as an im-

postor, who *could not* speak thus. I refer you to Lady Mason; she will vouch for me."

"No," said the colonel, drumming his teeth with his fingers.

"Yes—I beg your pardon."

"I am told not. We will see to that," he said, musing. "You went to school at St. Albans, I think your letter tells me."

"I did, sir. I was sent there by Lady Mason."

"So you said. Do you mean to repeat that Lady Mason sent you there?"

"I do—solemnly."

The colonel reflected for many minutes. At last he said, with an oath, "The sphynx was a young beginner at the making of riddles: confound me if I can make this out—nor could she, either. Your master's name?"

"Burridge," said I.

"Burr*age* or Burr*idge*?" he inquired. I satisfied him upon that point.

"I will write to him; but no. Could you get him to certify that he was paid by Lady Mason?"

"I can; and willingly he'll furnish it."

"Very well. Still I would rather see him. Burridge? no, it can't be."

"I will beg of him to come to town and wait upon you."

"Do," he said quickly—"I shall be glad to see him. Our business is ended for the present, I think. You know where to find me?"

"Colonel, your servant. Good-morning."

"You're an insolent young dog," said the colonel with a good-humoured smile. "Give me thy young fist."

He gazed at me earnestly, as he shook my hand, and turned away. "Good-bye, child," then between his teeth, "his mother's son, or the devil's."

Overjoyed at the lucky train in which I had, as I imagined, succeeded in placing matters, I made the best of my way to Myte's house.

I found the little man seated in the office, rubbing his legs up and down with his hands.

"Well," said he, "you're come at last. Whose business have you been upon, mine or yours? I would not for all the world, the sun, and moon, and all the stars in the firmament into the bargain, that your business should halt, while mine runs on all-fours."

I expressed a hope that he had not wanted me during my absence.

"Wanted you!" he replied, scratching his cheek, "not wanted you, exactly; but wondered where you could be got; thought you might have exhaled, like a bottle of smoke. Here has been Woful, that uncle of yours—but I suppose I must not call him so now; he has been *wanting* you. He dashed into the office a few minutes ago, and 'Where's Richard?' says he—'Is Richard in?' with a stare. 'Where's Richard?' says I, 'Richard's out,' with a stare just like it. Upon that, he turned round and trotted out like a dog that has gone up a wrong alley. But, where have you been, if I may presume to inquire?"

"I have just waited upon Colonel Brett," said I.

"You have?" cried Myte, getting up and minutely inspecting me. "You say, you have called upon Ninus, and still got these upon your head;" and he took me by the ear. "How comes that to pass?"

"I don't know what you mean," I said, laughing.

"I mean, I thought he would have cropped them," answered Myte. "I once saw a man put his head into the lion's mouth in May Fair, and when somebody asked him how it was the lion didn't bite it off, he said, 'he supposed the lion had got the toothache.' Some such lucky accident has saved you this once."

"No, indeed," I replied, and related to him all that had passed.

"Why, this is a wondrous mystery," cried Myte, who had listened to my recital with a great deal more astonishment than I was prepared to expect; "this beats Steele's salmon in satin petticoats in the Tatler. Then you really think, Ricardo, you shall be able to make them acknowledge you?"

"I do," said I; "why should you doubt it?"

He was silent for a few moments. "Semiramis so posi-

tively swears you are not her son. Nay, I have it from my own son-in-law, Langley. Could I be assured you were her child——"

"What would you do then, sir?" I inquired somewhat coldly.

"I like you," said he, "and you should stay with me, in spite of all."

"Nay, if you doubt——" I began in some heat.

"Softly, softly," said he, "don't let us begin a duel with tongues, or down upon my marrow-bones drop I, and beg for mercy. I mean nothing but good-will towards you—seriously, Richard Savage, which I hope, and trust, and believe is your name. Come, let us shake hands."

At this moment in walked Ludlow. "I have been taking a turn," he said, "finding you had not returned. Well, what says the great man?"

I told him.

"Come, that's better," he replied, "if any thing can be better where all is so bad. Mr. Myte," turning to him, "would you believe it?"

"What's 'it?'" cried Myte. "None of your pronouns. I can believe *it*, and *that*, and *this*, and *t'other*—any thing. After my belief of Richard's relationship to Mrs. Brett," ("he doesn't know what Semiramis means," with a wink at me,) "and after my belief in the existence of so unnatural a mother, I have a stomach for any thing. What story of a flying fish have you got for me now? If you don't make its wings too large, it won't stick in my throat, I promise you."

"You are very facetious," said Ludlow; "but merriment sounds like mockery to a sad heart. After five-and-twenty years' honest, faithful, and diligent service, my Lady Mason has been pleased to dismiss me. I think she has acted wrong, because——"

"God bless my soul!" cried Myte, "I really am much concerned," and he looked so. "I hope not on our young friend's account?"

"Why do you hope so?" said Ludlow—"the reason, or the pretext is of small importance, so long as my character is not brought in question."

"Which it cannot be," said Myte.

"Which it *cannot* be," echoed Ludlow: "I say, I think she has acted wrong, because she had no right to expect I should remain silent. She has taken her daughter's side against Richard, and does injustice by permitting it. Yes, she has," turning to me, "nor will she consent to see you more."

"I care not to see her," said I, "nor do I regard her adherence to my mother. *She* needs no assistance; but we want Lady Mason, and when we require we can demand her."

"Can't we?" cried Ludlow, with some appearance of glee. "She cannot deny——"

"That I am the son of Earl Rivers," said I.

"That she committed you, through me, to the care of Mrs. Freeman," pursued Ludlow.

"That she herself sent me to school, and paid Mr. Burridge out of her own pocket," I added.

"That she ordered me to take you away from thence, and then compelled me to bind you to the cob——"

"Enough," said I, hastily, in dread of the coming reference to the cobbler.

"Yes, enough, of all conscience," said Myte. "I can't look two ways at once. I hate this see-saw talk. It moves the head a great deal more than the curiosity."

"We always feared the inhumanity of his mother; that was the cause of our giving out that he was dead," said Ludlow.

"I know all that," answered Myte; "but why did *we* always fear it? Because your mistress was foolish and weak, why were you weak and foolish?"

"I thought her so at first, I confess," said Ludlow; "but——"

"You didn't afterwards? He can't see his own weakness," said Myte, turning to me. "Woful, when a man eats a cursed onion, you may nose him afar off, and he smells most odiously; eat a cursed onion yourself, and you cannot smell him at all. Your combined folly has destroyed this lad's prospects; and, hang it! let us say

this for Semiramis—she has no reason to curtsey to the compliment you have paid her."

"I pay her a compliment!" said Ludlow. "But you are speaking in your way. I tell you, sir, the boy would have been murdered by her, if we had not taken him out of her reach, and concealed the fact of his continued existence."

"And that she has been told—eh?" exclaimed Myte. "A very pretty compliment when you return a full-grown fellow to his mother, who thought him dead, and wished him so. 'Madam, here he is; make much of him: his weasand has outgrown your fingers.' Ho, ho!" and Myte laughed with exceeding satisfaction.

"Don't you see," said Ludlow, with some asperity, when Myte had left us, "how that man's foolish habit of jesting perverts his understanding, and corrupts his heart? There is he gone, I warrant, to his family, to make light of our distresses."

"You are mistaken in him," said I; "come, make allowance for the gaiety of his temperament, and remember the solemnity of your own."

"Well—no matter," he replied; "let us banish him from our thoughts. This strange proceeding on the part of Lady Mason——"

"Ay, what do you think of doing?"

"I don't know," he answered; "I have taken a lodging for the present."

"Where?"

He remained silent, and was slightly disconcerted.

"The people of the house where my wife is," he said, at length, "are reputable, and had apartments to spare, and—I have taken them. You don't think that right," he added, after a pause.

"Nay, you are the best judge of your own conduct. Do you intend that she shall live with you again?"

"No," he said, resolutely, "I do not; or, if I did, fate has prevented that. I have told you she is dying. But, now, what are we to do with that wolfish woman?"

"My mother? You must not call her so. Why, Ludlow, we must make a lamb of her."

"Ah!" said he, "would that I could see that change! I could forgive everything, *now*, if she could be brought to do you justice. The colonel may, perhaps, do something. Fear might make her."

I shook my head.

"Fear—of shame, I mean," he resumed. "She knows no other fear. I will manage Lady Mason. I am strong enough for that. She is too old to begin to be wicked."

He applauded my resolution of writing instantly to Burridge.

"He is the man of all others," he said, "to engage in this matter, if he will but move in it. Your mother would tremble under that glorious eye of his, I am sure of it. I should like to see the first meeting between them."

He pressed a considerable sum of money upon me.

"Bless you," he cried, "I don't want it. I have more than I shall know what to do with, if I keep it to myself; and when you have an independence, you may repay me, if you like. Besides, Myte will treat you better while you stay with him, if he sees that it is of no importance to you whether you stay or no. It is the way of this delightful world."

When he was gone, I sat down and wrote a letter to Burridge, in which I conjured him to forward without delay the required certificate, or, if it were in his power, to come up to town, and make himself the present means of establishing my claims. To Lady Mason I disdained to apply. Her conduct had been so ambiguous, that, whilst I dreaded her hostility, I meditated her exposure. It was clear that she was under the fear and direction of her daughter; it was not so certain that, if I molested her, I should not convert an instrument into a party against me.

Burridge returned no reply. I was thunder-struck at this. Could he, also, have been bought or begged off? I scorned the supposition the instant it entered my mind; but, after the lapse of a week, a second letter having been equally unsuccessful, I was constrained to yield admittance to the unworthy stranger, and devoted the world and its contents, from Burridge downwards and upwards, to perdition.

In the mean while, Myte, day by day, became more and

more staid and serious—as wise and worshipful as any other of the dull dogs of mankind, who are, at all events, wise enough to know, that the gift of speech, unless confined to monosyllables, is not calculated to enhance their reputation for wisdom. This behaviour on the part of Myte was so far from incensing me, that I was amused by it. The consciousness of being ill-treated imparts a sort of satisfaction to the sufferer, derived, I imagine, from the contemplation of one's own worth, as opposed to the folly, meanness, or malignity, as the case may be, of the wrongdoer. I suffered him, therefore, to pursue his humour, without expostulation or complaint, and consigned my best powers of conversation wholly to Mrs. Myte, and little Martha, with both of whom I had succeeded in making myself a favourite, and who were not to be deterred by Myte (I know not that he did attempt to influence them) from behaving themselves towards me with their former affability and kindness.

One evening I called upon Ludlow, to relate the failure of my application to Burridge. He came down to me in the passage, and heard all I had to say in silence.

"Nevertheless," he said, rubbing his chin, "we shall be too much for them at last. Lady Mason is obdurate still —never mind. She has discarded me, but she cannot get rid of her conscience—she cannot make that her servant, and turn it away at pleasure. Or, if she can and should do," shaking his head wisely—"all out. We will loosen Burridge's tongue, and tie up their tongues for ever. Come up stairs and sit with me, I am alone. If you should see a certain person during the evening," he added, halting upon the stairs, "I hope you will not make her perceive that you have heard all, and that you scorn and despise her."

"My dear Ludlow," I replied, in a whisper, "how can you suppose that I should breathe a syllable——"

"It is not breath," he returned, "the eye speaks more than the tongue sometimes. I know, Dick, she ought to be hated—abhorred—scorned! but I cannot do it myself, and I could not," he pressed my hand, "bear to see any thing like it from others; least of all from you."

He was greatly disturbed during the evening, getting up,

sitting down, handling the things upon the table, and frequently leaving the room. At length the door of an inner apartment opened, and an emaciated being entered, with faltering steps, and was directed by Ludlow's eye, to an arm chair.

"Do you feel better, do you think?" said Ludlow, after a long pause, his nether lip quivering.

"I thank you—I think I am worse," replied his wife in a tone so piteous—so self-abased, as to bring tears into my eyes. Ludlow averted his head, and presently left the room.

Whatever share of beauty Mrs. Ludlow might once have possessed had entirely left her. Not even the traces of it remained. There was a meanness of expression in the face—I remember it well—which made me feel doubtful at the time whether she could ever have been handsome.

As Ludlow did not return, I thought it only proper to venture upon a few general remarks, such as obtain with our thoughtful and speech-saving countrymen, and which are made up of comments upon the weather that was, observations upon the weather that is, and prognostications of the weather that will be. These ended, I had nothing further to say.

"And you are the son of my old mistress," she said, at length—"Mr. Ludlow tells me you are the son of Mrs. Brett. What wonderful things do happen."

I silently assented. She was a living witness to the truth of that.

"You are a great favourite with Mr. Ludlow, sir," she resumed. "He is a good man; the best of men." A sigh followed.

"He is, indeed, a good man," I said.

"Oh! he is, sir. After what has happened too; after what I have been to him—I am sure," she raised her handkerchief as she spoke, and sobbed, "all that I could do in after years, if it pleased Heaven to spare my life, could not——"

I was glad that Ludlow entered at the moment. I began to feel rather sick, and shortly after took my leave. As I walked home, how came that delectable wight, Joseph

Carnaby, to rise up before my mind's eye, in the plenitude of his peculiar power?

The next day, a very mournful-looking person waited upon me, representing that he was Mr. Greaves, at whose house Ludlow lodged, and bearing a message from him to the effect that he wished me to come to him immediately.

I inquired the occasion of so sudden a summons.

"Oh, sir!" he replied, "the worthy gentleman's wife is, we fear, dying. Mrs. Greaves is certain she cannot last many hours, and her husband is in a terrible taking, to be sure. He has not yet been in to see her, but waits till you come."

I snatched my hat, and accompanied Mr. Greaves.

On entering Ludlow's room, I found him in a state of the greatest distress, pacing to and fro, and flinging up his hands distractedly. "All over—dying," he exclaimed, as I drew near—"what am I to do? what am I to *do?* I look up to you now, Dick—tell me."

"Collect yourself," said I, "this is no sudden thing—you have been expecting it."

"Oh no!" he replied, shaking his head with a shudder.

"Oh yes!" cried a little doleful woman, coming forward. "Me and Mr. Greaves has, I'm sure, and so we've told you. Come, sit'ee down, that's a good man, and be quiet. You can't do her no good, and so don't go to do yourself no harm."

Ludlow, after bestowing upon this contemner of grammatical propriety an unmeaning stare, waved her from him, and sank into a seat.

Mrs. Greaves now directed her attention to me. "Oh! you're the young gentleman as the poor woman wished to see, are you? Well, I'll prepare her to see you; she can't speak, I'm afraid, by this time."

She beckoned me into the passage. "Lord love you!" she said in a loud whisper, "she can't last out the night. I hope you're not a near relation, for I shouldn't like to hurt your feelings; but the truth must be told; she's going very fast."

Here Mr. Greaves, who had been waiting in the passage,

upcast a pair of large dismal eyes, till the whites were alone visible. "Is she worse," he inquired, recovering his vision, "than Mrs. Wokey the night before——"

"She died?" cried his wife, anticipating the termination of the sentence. "Greaves, Mrs. Wokey was nothing like her. Why, you know, we didn't think that would be so soon."

Mr. Greaves pointed to an indentation in the wall. "Made by the coffin," he remarked, raising his brows.

"So it was," assented the wife. "But come this way, young man. Mr. Greaves, don't you go out till I come down," and she led the way to the apartment of Mrs. Ludlow.

She was, indeed, greatly changed, and for the worse. Unused to the varying appearances of sickness, I could scarcely have imagined that so perceptible an alteration could have taken place in so short a time as the period of a few hours since I had last seen her.

She motioned me to a chair by the bed-side, and made a sign to Mrs. Greaves to leave the room. The woman did so, slowly and with apparent reluctance, softly closing the door. When the door *was* closed, I was as perfectly assured that she was listening, as though I had seen her ear through the keyhole. "I hope, sir," began Mrs. Ludlow, in a faint voice—in a voice so faint, indeed, that Mrs. Greaves must have been, during our colloquy, in an ecstasy of tormentingly unsatisfied curiosity; "I hope, sir, you will not think I have been too free in sending for you; but I think—I really think, *now*—that I am dying. Mr. Ludlow will do any thing you bid him—I know he will. Oh, sir! intercede for me with him—for his forgiveness." Here she was much affected, and could not proceed for some minutes.

"I feel at last," she resumed; "do not withdraw your hand, Mr. Savage, if I presume to take it—at last I feel—how fully, how deeply I cannot tell you, that there is no hope for my poor sinful soul in the other world, if I do not obtain his pardon. He was ever too good to me—oh, sir!" She looked imploringly at me. "Do help to save my soul!"

I was touched, and involuntarily returned the pressure of

her hand. "Do not say another word," I exclaimed, rising, "I will go to him this instant. There was a providence, madam, in your unexpected meeting, and it must be fulfilled." She gave me a look of gratitude, and I left her.

I related to Ludlow what had passed between us.

"She thought it necessary there should be a mediator?" he said, and his face brightened up, but was again overcast. "Oh no! but I am glad she chose you. Richard, not a word of forgiveness has passed these lips; I am too much of a man for that; but now that she is dying——"

"You will forgive all her faults," I said, taking him by the arm.

"The dying have no faults—except to Heaven!" he exclaimed: "oh! my dear fellow, live, and you will know that, when those you love are taken from you. You don't know," he added in a familiar tone, "how I loved that girl."

"Yes, yes, I do," I replied—"come, you will see her now, will you not?"

"There was that Bennett," he said, halting at the door, "if ever I were to go mad, that dead wretch—dead as he is—would make me so—*he* loved her. No—no—I won't think of that. The wretched creature, Dick—the frightful face—the abject—mean—base—oh God!" and he took me by the shoulders, "am I human? Am I a man? Do I want *more* vengeance? It is *here*," striking his bosom. "Let no one say revenge is sweet."

"We lose it at the moment we detect,"

poor Ludlow would, perhaps, have added, had Pope written the line then, and had Ludlow read it. I led him upstairs. He trembled violently, as he approached the bed on which his wife lay. He was silent, expecting her to speak. She appealed to me with her eyes.

"One word, Ludlow—it may be the last."

"Do not leave the room," he said, turning to me, "you shall see that I am not ashamed."

He dropped upon his knees by the bedside.

"Jane," he uttered, "I forgive you; but that is nothing.

It is God who forgives—I pray for you. I hope what I say makes you happy—I hope you are happy."

She wept abundantly. His frame was shaken by emotion.

"What can I do?" he said, rising—"can I say more?—from my heart I cannot.

"Could I talk cant to her," he proceeded, drawing me to the other end of the room, and wringing my hands—"vile, horrid cant, and tell her how happy we might have been—how miserable we are—all that makes a death-bed agony—it would kill her. Stay: let me go to her. Jane"—and he took her hand and kissed it—"I forgive you—oh! I forgive you. I would kiss your lips, my poor, poor girl—but——

"I *cannot*," coming to me—"all that I can do or say would torture her. Would it not? See, I have killed her."

Mrs. Ludlow had fainted. I rang the bell vehemently. Mrs. Greaves entered on the instant. I dragged my friend from the room, as the woman exclaimed, "She is dead."

Mrs. Greaves came down to us after a short time. "She has revived," she said, "but I don't know——"

I motioned her to be silent. "The doctor is here," she continued, "and what can be done, will be done; but, after all——"

"There is no certainty in this life," said Mr. Greaves, who had entered unperceived.

Ludlow insisted upon my staying with him all night, and Greaves was despatched to Myte with the intelligence.

I had neither time nor disposition, on that evening, to scan the meaning of Myte's reply, which the solemn landlord, I doubt not, delivered with exemplary correctness, and which was in these words, "Tell him he may stay as long as he pleases, and please himself as long as he stays."

Mrs. Ludlow outlived that night, and fluctuated during three or four days, when, much to the surprise of us all, and by no means the least so to Mr. and Mrs. Greaves, the doctor declared her out of danger.

Upon this, I prevailed upon Ludlow, whose faculties during the interval of suspense had been almost prostrated, to let me go to Myte, if only for a few hours. By this

time, a letter might be lying for me from Burridge. I could not altogether relinquish that hope.

"Mr. Savage," said Mrs. Greaves, intercepting me in the passage, as I was going out, "a strange man has been inquiring whether you live here, and he wanted to take Greaves to the tavern, who can go there very well without his assistance, I can tell you. I expect he'll be brought home a corpse one of these nights."

"From Mr. Myte, I dare say," I said. A thought came across me that it might be Burridge. I questioned the woman, but her description, (accustomed as we all are to accommodate the making out of another to our own wish) in no respect tallied with my original.

I was puzzled; but thought no more of it at the moment.

"And so poor Mrs. Ludlow is better," said Mrs. Greaves.

"Very much," I replied; "she will do now."

"Picking up, greatly?" said Mrs. Greaves.

"Oh yes—an excellent appetite."

She drew near to me, and with a sagacious shake of the head, and her forefinger in action—"The very worst sign in the world. Poor man! I pity him. You will see—she will go off in her chair one of these days—after a hearty meal."

CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE IS MADE THE PRINCIPAL IN AN UNLOOKED FOR ADVENTURE, AND FINDS CERTAIN NEW AND SERVICEABLE FRIENDS.

Mr. Langley came out of Myte's door as I was about to enter it. Upon perceiving me, he hesitated; then removing his hat, and making me a cold and ceremonious bow, he glided past me. I was half tempted to run after him, and inquire the reason of this conduct; but, concluding that whatever the cause might be, I should be able to collect it from his father-in-law, I walked into the office.

Hearing my footstep, Myte, who was seated at his desk, raised his head, and with eyes and the feather end of his

pen directed towards me, continued to gaze upon me for some time.

"What Levant wind blew you hither?" he said, at last; "or have you come to ask me to bail you to the sessions? for, I suppose you were either compelled to come, or have a favour to beg."

"Neither," I replied, smiling, for I supposed him to be in jest. "Ludlow is now better, and can spare me, and so I have returned."

"And so you've returned—ugh!" cried Myte, with a sort of grunt: "have you brought any news with you?"

"None, in particular."

"Not time yet to fire 'em off?" suggested Myte; "Mendez Pinto got 'em ready more easily."

"What do you mean?" said I, in doubt whether I ought to laugh or to take offence.

"Pinto was one of those men that never let down the bucket to help Truth out of her well," answered Myte.

"What of that?" I exclaimed, in perplexity.

"Isn't Ludlow a little like Pinto? and are not you his apprentice?"

"Mr. Myte!" I exclaimed, in indignant astonishment, "this language——"

"Has only truth to recommend it," cried Myte, rising, "and therefore will carry little weight with you. Go away, young man—go away; and let me never see your face again. A fellow of your parts—Lord bless my soul! that might tear the bandage from Fortune's eyes, and make her smile at you for doing so—that might invent a wheel of your own with cogs in it, to turn hers at pleasure—cogs? —*cogs*—oh, d—— it!" (the only oath I ever heard from Myte's lips) "I think there has been a great deal too much cogging already between you. Ricardo—Richard Freeman—I blush for you."

"Do you?" I replied: "I wish I could see your meaning; that and your blushes are alike hidden at present."

"None of your jeers," cried Myte, in a rage, colouring in downright earnest. "You'll put me in a passion, and I'm—I don't know what, when I'm once roused. I can say

hard things—but I won't. You want my meaning, do you? Take it, then. Woful—(what the deuce!) Ludlow and you have been concocting a plot—*that* we have discovered—I always thought it a strange story—to pass yourself off for the son of Semira—Mrs. Brett. I am convinced of it *now*."

"Convinced of it!" said I, with an insolent sneer; "and *now!* since when is that *now?* How much—how much wrought that conviction? Tell me, good Mr. Myte, for *how much* my good mother, Mrs. Brett, bought you (was there much haggling?)—purchased you, I say, in a lump, as it were: bluster and remonstrance—virtuous resentment and invisible blushes. I hope the gold, at least, was true."

"Out—out of my house!" roared Myte, and he sprang nimbly forwards, and I verily thought was going to lay hands upon me. "I sell myself to Mrs. Brett for money! I, and my son Langley, lend ourselves to—Oh! go away—or I know not what I may do."

"I care not, for my part," said I. "For what, Mr. Myte, do you take me?"

"An impostor!" he cried, decisively.

"And what the aim of my imposition?"

"The extortion of money," he said, with equal promptness.

"Oh, sir!" I rejoined, "fair play, if you please. If you suspect, why may not I? If money is so potential, perhaps you acknowledge its influence—feel it—fall to it."

"My character through life," said he, after a pause, "sets aside that supposition."

"Will Ludlow's stand him in any stead?" I asked. "Charity, Mr. Myte."

"Freeman," he began.

"My name is not Freeman, sir."

"Never mind that. We would not believe anything against you; we—Langley and I—upon the mere word of Mrs. Brett. Why, my thoughts were friendly towards you—very friendly."

"You told me that once before, sir, and still I doubt it. Words are wind, and easily vented."

"Therefore, I forgive what you say," returned Myte. "Let me go on. We had a worthier assurance than Mrs. Brett could offer."

"And whose was that?" I inquired.

"An honourable lady; Lady Mason. She has told us that you are——"

"An impostor?"

"That word was your own," cried Myte;—"that you are Ludlow's nephew. She thinks so. At all events, that you are not the son of Mrs. Brett. That child died in its infancy."

"Gracious God!" I exclaimed, "do you mean to say that Lady Mason has disowned me? I'll not believe it. This is another worthy device of my excellent mother. But why do I talk to you? Does it signify to me a rush what you think of me?"

"Yes," answered Myte, "it does. The good opinion of an honest man is worth all the rushes that were ever made into chairs for knaves to sit upon. I tell you that Langley and I waited upon Lady Mason, and had it from her own lips."

I was confounded and unable to speak for some time. Myte regarded me with an aspect of pity.

"My poor Ricardo!" said he, shaking his head. "You also, I fear, have been deceived by that insidious villain, Ludlow. Nay, don't storm, or I shall be certain you are acting in concert."

"But I will speak, sir."

"Young man," said Myte, with more solemnity than I thought he could put on, "when people league together to do base things, they should be very circumspect; but what has Ludlow done? No sooner is he turned out of doors by his mistress, than he recalls—reclaims—faugh! takes to his bosom his wife—as infamous woman as ever spurned at every suggestion of decency, of virtue, of humanity. You see, we know all. And what have *you* done? you have positively gone to live with them—you have made yourself one of them—identified yourself with them. What is the inevitable conclusion?" raising his voice. "Why, roguery,

roguery, roguery. Oh!" and he shook his head so that his face was scarce distinguishable; "no more, no more. If you think you have any claim upon Mrs. Brett, get away from them, have nothing to do with them; with your hands to your ears, and your feet to the ground, scamper away from them."

This was a home thrust which I could not parry. It did look awkward. He was right. It was so excellent a foundation for Mrs. Brett to build upon; I could not but see that. And then what man out of a thousand—if, indeed, any man were to be found, who could understand, much less sympathise with the feelings that had prompted Ludlow to take back to his forgiveness a penitent sinner—that sinner being his wife. Presently, however, a sense of Myte's injustice towards me—an unprotected, inexperienced youth—returned to me. I was too proud to ask him to put a favourable construction upon my proceedings—to suspend his opinion of me. I turned, therefore, to him, and said,—

"I called, sir, to inquire whether a gentlemen, tall and stout, has been here after me?"

"No gentleman," returned Myte, "tall and stout, or short and slender, has been here. Do you mean Colonel Brett?"

"I do not. Is any letter lying for me?"

"No letter lies for you here."

"Then, good morning, sir," and I was about to depart.

"Stay!" cried Myte; "let us see—your clothes—you will come for them?"

"I will send for them," I replied; "into this house, sir, I never set my foot again."

"Would to God, Richard," said Myte, "I could think you honest."

"Is your money safe?" said I, looking over my shoulder. "Is your plate gone? Have you counted the spoons? Where's your watch?"

"Stay, I tell you," urged Myte, fumbling in his pocket for a small key, which he drew out.

"How I hate," I exclaimed, "this detestable scene. Mr. Myte, you shall regret your conduct to me this day—upon

my soul, you shall. What new insult? Search my trunks. I will wait while you send for a tipstaff."

"I didn't mean that—not that," cried Myte, clapping down the lid of a tin box which he had just opened. "Look here, Ricardo. I should like to part good friends with you, in case your story should turn out to be true. Upon my word, it would go nigh to break my heart—it would, indeed, to think that I had done you injustice. See here," he continued, opening the box, and coming towards me with a coaxing smile, "look at these. Here, take these parings from the hoof of the golden calf," and he handed me several pieces of gold.

The old fellow caused a rising in my throat, which I gulped down again.

"Give me these parings, as you call them," I said.

"Yes," he replied, complacently, counting them into my hand. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, *ten*—there."

I tossed them from me on the ground as a man deals cards.

"There," said I, "stoop and pick them up, as you have stooped, I dare say, to pick up money. I shall not stoop to receive money from you. Now, if this is not the basest insult of all; but I'll be even with you yet."

"Oh! dear me—don't!" exclaimed Myte, seizing me by the coat. "If that wasn't the face, and the voice too, of Semiramis, may I never touch gold more."

I broke from him, and rushed out of the office; and, hastening up a gateway, gave vent to my feelings in a flood of tears. I had conceived a sort of affection for the little man, the extent of which, until I parted from him (as I resolved, for ever) I did not know. I felt a yearning, too, to take leave of Mrs. Myte and her daughter, who had, upon all occasions, treated me with singular and unvarying kindness. But that must not be thought of now. Other considerations pressed upon me.

And, first—should I return to Ludlow? I could not but be sensible that to continue to reside under the same roof with him must prejudice me very strongly in the eyes

of those who were to decide upon the reality of my claims. The recent forgiveness of his wife would not be so called by the world, which never gives a man credit for a Christian virtue, when the action of which it is the effect can be referred to a base motive. Her continuance in the house, coupled with my residence there, must inevitably throw an air of collusion over the whole business. Myte, after all, was not so much to blame. Mankind generally would draw the same inference. But then, I could not bring myself to leave Ludlow in his present frame of mind, of which, for a reason I will hereafter disclose, I have furnished only a faint description to the reader. Besides, the very money wherewith I should be enabled to support myself for a time, was of his provision; and it would be nothing short of ingratitude to run away from him—to employ a common saying—in the very shoes he had placed upon my feet.

Again, the extraordinary weakness or wickedness of Lady Mason, our joint endeavours could alone counteract. There could be no doubt—for Myte in grave matters was a man of veracity—that she had renounced me to him and Langley, and that she was prepared to maintain her disavowal, at all hazards. "Hang that woman—that wife of his!" thought I, as I turned into the street in which we lodged! "would that Ludlow had never sought, or seen her!"

I was about to knock at the door, when a man tapped me on the shoulder. "One word with you, if you please," he said, beckoning me a few paces. I attended him.

"Is your name Savage?" he inquired.

"It is; what do you want?"

"Here, Bill, lend a hand," he said.

Bill, it seemed, was alive to business; for scarce were the words spoken, when my arms were pinioned by a powerful ruffian, and I was thrust into a coach, the two men tumbling in after me. In an instant, the door was closed, the windows were drawn up—the blinds after them, and the coach drove off at a rapid rate.

I was so confounded by this sudden seizure, that I was surprised out of my presence of mind. In a moment, however, I regained my senses, and struggling violently with

the two fellows, attempted to get hold of the handle of one of the doors.

"Curse his young bones and muscles," cried one of them, with a brutal oath. "This won't do. Down with him, Bill."

Hereupon, Bill dealt me a tremendous blow on the side of the head, and winding his hand into my cravat, thrust me down upon one of the seats. "I shall be choked," I gasped; "don't murder me."

"Not this bout," cried the fellow, with a hoarse chuckle, planting his knee upon my chest, and forcing my head back with his hand. "Now, Watson, where's the rope? Just tie up his pickers and stealers; he can't do much harm, after that."

Watson was ready with his rope, which he bound tightly round my wrists. "Now get up," said he, lending me a back-handed slap upon the face, "and tell us how you find yourself by this time."

Whatever my private feelings of resentment might be, I was wise enough to keep them very private. I perceived it was useless to remonstrate with men, whom, had I been at perfect liberty, I could not effectually resist, and who had rendered me altogether powerless. They were acting under orders; and these, although in some alarm, I applied myself to discover.

"Gentlemen," I began, (what a shocking perversion of this word circumstances compel us, at times, to commit!) —"gentlemen, I am sure there must be some mistake. I cannot be the person you want."

"Shall I just make the gag useful?" said the fellow, who was called Bill; "that mouth of his will be opening."

"Young fellow," cried the other, "if you'll promise not to set up your throat, and to attempt no escape, Bill, there, shall keep his gag in his pocket; if you make a noise or a scuffle," swearing horribly, "it shall be worse for you. We have got you; and we know what to do with you; and what we choose to do with you, nobody need know. We shan't murder you, I dare say, unless you wish it."

"But, what are you going to do with me?" I urged,

greatly disturbed at this speech, which implied that murder was one of the branches of the worthies' profession.

"He will be chattering, you see," said Bill.

"Never mind," replied Watson, "it does him good, and us no harm. It's natural he should feel a little curiosity. Shouldn't *you*, Bill?"

"Why, yes," said Bill. "Nature, you know, as a man may say, is what we all feel——"

"Do we?" returned Watson. "Well, I'm no scholar, and don't know much about that."

"Gentlemen," said I, "I am sure you are in an error. I am certain you have taken the wrong person."

"Catch us doing that," replied Watson; "though I dare say, if we had taken any one else instead of you, you'd have thought him the right one. No—no."

"I am known to nobody," I said. "No human being can possibly entertain any enmity against me."

"Perhaps not," returned Watson quietly; "we heard it was to be all for your good; you wouldn't be easy, young fellow; and so you're to be sent where they'll try to make you comfortable."

"What have I done?" I inquired. "I have injured nobody."

"Perhaps not," again said Watson; "it appears you have been paying great attention to a certain lady, who'd rather be without it; and that's the long and the short. You shan't be sent to the Indies, without knowing who's to be at the expense of you."

"The Indies," I exclaimed. "And who is it would send me there?"

"Ah!" cried Watson, while Bill chuckled approvingly at his friend's peculiar humour, "you'll know that one of these days, when you return with a yellow face, and a bag of yellow guineas. 'Mrs. B——; how d'ye do, dear Mrs. B——; many thanks for your kindness in taking care of me—here I am, come back again, you see.' Then says Mrs. B——, 'Mighty glad to see you, I protest,' says she; 'and how did you leave the blacks at Jamaica?' she says. 'Why, mum,' says you, 'they're as well as the whites'll let

'em be. They keep their colour,' you says, 'which is more than I've been able to do,' meaning your yellow phiz. Oh! you've a famous chance before you, Mr. Savage, and I wish you luck, with all my heart. You'll remember us when you return?"

I said no more. It was too clear that Mrs. Brett was at the bottom of this—that my mother had hit upon these means of providing for me.

"Come, young one," cried Bill, after a long pause, attracting my attention by a kick on the shins, "don't fall asleep. You'll have plenty of time for a nap, before they give you a row down the river. What time are they to be up with the boat?" to Watson.

"Nine," replied his companion.

"Three good hours, yet," rejoined Bill. "We're nearly there by this time, I should think."

"I dare say," answered Watson, letting down the blind and the window. "You're a good one, at a guess, Bill," he continued, drawing in his head, which he had thrust out at the window—"here we are. Stop!"

The coach now stopped, and the driver came to the door, which he opened.

"Now, Mr. Savage, *will* you be so good?" cried Watson with mock politeness—"there, now,—not quite so fast," he added, seizing me, as I attempted to spring out of the vehicle—"we're so fond of your company, that we *must* stick to you. Lend a hand, Bill, and show the gentleman into the house. Be very gentle with him—you know how."

The ruffian took the hint. Clasping me under the arm with one huge hand, he wound the other into my cravat, forcing his knuckles into my throat. Watson did likewise, and lifting me out of the coach, and urging me forward with their knees, they succeeded in getting me into the passage of a small alehouse.

"Now, Rugby," cried Watson, as they dragged me towards the back part of the house, speaking to a short stout man, who was lighting a lantern, "we've caught our bird at last. He hasn't sung much since we've had him."

"Oh! he's a sweet one—he is," cried Rugby, as he

looked into my face by the aid of the lantern, giving me a plaguy chuck under the chin, and mimicking the chirping sound with which a man encourages his favourite bird. "He hasn't sung much, hasn't he? it's moulting time with him," surveying my clothes.

"He'll soon shed his feathers, I doubt."

"A tankard of ale," said Watson; "we've had dry work hitherto." Rugby went away, presently returning with a foaming measure.

"Now, Mr. Savage," said Watson, turning to me, "tell us at once, to save trouble. Will you go up stairs quietly? or do you mean to compel us to treat you roughly? Bill, let go his throat, will you?"

"If you will unbind my wrists, I will go quietly," I said; "the rope hurts them very much. Nay, upon my honour, I will offer no resistance."

"I think we can manage him, if he does," said Rugby; "why, if you'd only leave him to me, I'd up with him in no time."

"You would," cried Watson; "he'd down with you in less than no time: I can tell you that, mine host. There, Bill, pocket the rope; and hand over the tankard. Here, young one, lay hold. I like a fellow of spirit."

I drank heartily, emptying the measure. "Now, gentlemen," I said, giving the tankard to Rugby, "I attend you. It is useless to resist; and I shall not attempt it. You are going, it seems, to carry me on board a vessel."

"No, we ain't," replied Watson, "our work's nearly ended. When we've given you over to two jolly tars who will be here at nine, we've nothing to do but to make our bow to honest Rugby here," (the villainous host expanded his mouth into a grin at the inapplicable phrase) "and to wait upon the lady—dear Mrs. B——, your Mrs. B——, who will be anxious to know whether you have been placed in safe keeping."

"Well, gentlemen," I returned, "I give you warning, which I hope you will be pleased with me for doing—if I should find means to escape from the fate designed me by Mrs. B—— as you call her—now, or at any future time,

my best endeavours shall be exercised to trace you out, and to have you punished as you deserve. You know the law will not permit such outrages to be committed with impunity."

Bill had his hand up in readiness for a stunning blow, which he designed for my head, but he was checked by Watson with a fierce oath.

"Not much chance of your escaping, Savage," he said, with a laugh; "if you do, we will give you leave to set the bull-dogs after us. Come, walk up—you first, if you please."

So saying, he administered an unceremonious shove to me, which caused me to stumble over the first stair. "Lend us the lantern," said he, to Rugby; "this young gentleman's not used to your stairs. He'll come down more easily, I dare say." Having pushed me up three flights of steep and narrow stairs, the men halted at a door immediately before them.

"Where is the key, my jolly host?" asked Watson.

"Here, master," answered Rugby.

Watson, having unlocked, unbolted, and unbarred the door—for this door, unlike others that are usually to be met with in honest houses, was furnished with bolts and bars on the outside—projected his lantern, and took a momentary survey of the room, into which, immediately afterwards, he thrust me without ceremony.

"There—get you in there," said he, proceeding to lock, bolt and bar; "if you don't find it warm enough, there's plenty of room for a dance. No wind can get at him, I think, Rugby? the windows are pretty fast; and it won't whistle down the chimney, I promise you. You'll find a sort of a bed somewhere; take your nap out on it," he added, through the key-hole, "it hasn't been much slept upon lately; and I don't think there ever was a good sound night's rest got out of it yet."

With a burst of boisterous and, I dare say, heart-felt merriment, the three rogues left me to my own reflections.

And sad and bitter they were, for a time—and then, revengeful. But *her* revenge, it was too apparent, would precede mine, perhaps prevent it. Was it certain—what-

ever Watson might have hinted to the contrary—that my life would not be attempted—that I should not be murdered in this den? *That* I had full reason to believe would be the disposal of me most satisfactory to Mrs. Brett. For, of what avail—lasting avail—to send me to Jamaica, if I chanced to come back again, the possibility of my doing which my mother, guilty, I remembered, as well as malignant and revengeful, must have revolved, before she decided upon this step. Murdered—the decree had gone forth—I was to be murdered—drowned, it occurred to me, by the jolly tars of whom Watson had spoken, whose jollity would suffer little diminution from the trivial circumstance of having sent a poor devil to the bottom of the Thames. My hair stood on end at this suggestion—and the sweat gathered into drops upon my forehead.

The moon at the instant broke through the darkness. Bland goddess! she never walked out of a cloud to supply the exigence of the hide-bound brains of a poetaster more opportunely than she seemed to visit me in my prison, now. Through one of the small windows, high above my reach, and barred—her light streamed into the room, disclosing its dimensions. It was tolerably large and square. A huge, old-fashioned bedstead against the wall opposite the windows, the sole thing in the room, except myself—and I, indeed, a thing—entrapped, outwitted—brought to my pleas, and my knees, too; yes, my prayers, my tears, my cries, my wild howlings for mercy—for life—by a woman; and that woman (it was a lie—a fiend) my mother!

It would have done her heart good—I was about to write, but it had, long ago, been past that—to have heard me curse and swear, as I ran madly about the room, seeking some impossible outlet. No chimney—no trap-door in floor or ceiling; no chance of scaling the windows; no chance if I could do so. Exhausted, at length, by these unavailing and weak efforts, I flung myself upon the mattress. I would sleep out the interval, between this and nine o'clock. I wished the time were come. Suspense was agony.

It would not do. Sleep was out of the question. So

haps, receive me, and assist my deliverance out of the hands of these murderers. Or, if no window were accessible, I could alarm the passengers in the street by my outcries, who might insist upon, nay, who would compel my liberation. But would they so? I was not so certain of that. I decided that this should be my last resort; for I was well aware that unless I had an opportunity of telling my story first, I should stand small chance of obtaining credit for it, against the combined contradiction of three hard-fronted ruffians who could, doubtless, utter a lie with more confidence than an honest man could relate the truth.

The great fiend fly away with Rugby, and invent a new and exquisite torture expressly for him! His house had been built for the purpose, and he had taken it with the view of accommodating young gentlemen who might happen to fall under their mothers' displeasure, with a few hours' lodging preparatory to their embarkation for the plantations. I could not stretch myself sufficiently far out of the casement to distinguish whether there were houses on either side of us. I began to fear that our house (*our* house!) was detached, in which case no hope was left to me. All was silence. Before, and widely extended before, was a space of ground, diversified, here and there, with patches of hungry grass, and ponds of accumulated rain. Not a soul—and I watched for half an hour—dotted the surface of this lost waste; not a house was to be seen.

Next, as to escape from the hole in which I was. The edge of the roof—a steep one—was barely a yard and a half below the casement. There was not even the common wooden gutter to convey the rain from the eaves; and now I turned from the casement and placed this question straight before me. I repeated it aloud, that, as it were, my mind should distinctly see it. "Shall I stay here and submit myself to certain death, or, if that be not certain, to a life-long captivity worse than death, or shall I avail myself of this chance for my life which Providence has pointed out to me?"

No time was to be lost; nor could there be any hesitation. Having taken off my shoes, and put them in my

pockets, I fell upon my knees, and commended myself to God—and I arose, strengthened.

It was a matter of no small difficulty to get myself, in a collected form, outside the casement, and when I had done so, to project myself upwards by its side, which was raised from the roof. One glance below would have been inevitable destruction. I threw myself forward, and on hands and feet made my way towards the ridge of the roof in an oblique direction, purposing to reach the next house, if there were one. I had proceeded some distance, when one tile, and then another, and another, gave way from beneath my feet, which could effect no hold or stay—neither could my fingers, the nails of which I vainly endeavoured to infix into the mortar. I was now sliding downwards at full length. God! what a moment was that! My eyes closed—my senses reeled—and yet one thought—one vision horribly distinct within me. I saw myself below—on the ground—on the flinty-jagged stones—and what I saw—what figure, if figure it may be called—the reader shall imagine; for I cannot—or if I can, will not—describe it.

Merciful powers! what superhuman hand, outstretched from Heaven, has stayed—has saved me? Yes—my feet were stayed — restrained by a firm bulwark. I looked round—a secure wall, it seemed, against which I leaned—against which I lay my bursting temples. A flood of tears relieved me; my heart was thankful to the Almighty; but I could not as yet speak, nor could my mind yet form a prayer.

I had fallen against a stack of chimneys, placed, as well as I could guess, between the partition that divided Rugby's house from its neighbour. As yet, I could discover no garret-window corresponding with the one I had (and yet how long the time appeared!) just left. I decided, therefore, upon again venturing to the ridge of the roof, taking care to keep the chimneys immediately in my rear that, should my feet betray me a second time, they might once more stand me in good stead. This time I was more fortunate. Having reached the summit, I placed myself

astride upon the roof, and took a survey of the prospect on my right hand, which I had not yet seen. The river lay before me and beside me, with its multifarious craft, whose half-formed shadows hung beneath the water, black and almost as motionless as themselves. The beauty—if any there were — of this scene, was lost upon me. The picturesque must give way to the pressing, and I was in haste. Placing my hands before me, and impelling myself by my heels on either side of the roof, I got forward some distance till I was on a level with a second stack of chimnies, similar to the former. I slid down to these easily; and, lo! not far off—but beneath me—the flat top of a garret-window. There was a long iron bar; a hold-fast, I think it is called, attached to the chimnies and to the roof. I took off my cravat and tied it with a strong knot to my handkerchief, which I fastened to the bar; and winding the other end tightly round my wrist, let myself down to the small platform. There was barely space to crouch down upon it, which I did. The horrible yard and a half of steep tiles was under this window also. I shuddered at the thought of trusting myself to the frail security of the frame-work. I durst not attempt to crawl down by the side of the window, lest a single false step should precipitate me to the ground. And yet, how otherwise could I hope to get into it? Perhaps, by some blessed chance, the room was occupied. I stretched my hand over the edge, and strove to discover whether there was a light in it. I had hardly done so, when, methought, I heard voices; nor was I deceived; and the momentary radiance of a candle illumined a small portion of the atmosphere beneath me. Thrusting my arm down as low as it could reach, I laid hold upon one side of the casement, and burst it open with a violent crash.

"Christ Jesus! a ghost!" cried a voice, and then a heavy tumble upon the ground.

"What's the matter now?" exclaimed a second and more powerful voice. "Why, Simon, have you gone crazed?"

"There," cried the prostrate Simon, "there!" pointing, as I supposed, to the open casement.

"You fool!" said the other, "the fastening has given way: that's all."

I heard him approach the window. It was now my turn to join in the conversation.

"For God's sake," I began, "lend me some assistance."

"Hilloah!" cried the man, looking out. "Who the devil are you? what do you want?"

"Your assistance," I exclaimed. "I am an unfortunate young gentleman just escaped from murderers."

"Where from?"

"From a fellow named Rugby—the alehouse hard by."

"The devil!" said the man, "how did you contrive?—but a pretty fellow am I to be asking questions instead of lending a hand. Young man, turn yourself round, and let us see your feet over here instead of your chin; only, gently; mind, gently."

I was not long about that. Unwinding the end of my cravat from my wrist, I did as he directed. Taking me with a firm gripe by the ankles, he guided my feet till they rested upon the ledge of the window; then seizing me by the waistband with one hand, he clasped me tightly round the body with his arms, and drew me into the room.

Simon had, ere this, regained his legs, and for some moments after his father (for so my deliverer was) had seated me in a chair, stood staring at me in incredulous astonishment.

"Come, Simon," said his father, "stir about. Don't you see how pale the young gentleman looks. Go down stairs, and ask mother to lend you her bottle and a glass. Stay; tell her to come up, and see a sight worth looking at."

The brawny youth heaved a deep sigh from the bottom of his chest. "Well, father," said he, "if I didn't think it was a goblin, I hope I may never touch victuals again."

"You'll empty many a cupboard before you see a goblin," cried his father, as Simon left the room. "That boy," he added, turning to me, "has been made a fool of by his mother. But, come: cheer up—the worst is over."

I began to make excuses for the trouble and interruption I had caused.

"Not a word of that," said he; "I'd rather see two honest men come in at the window, than one rogue at the door, any day—wouldn't you? And so no more words about that."

"Where is the precious young lamb?" cried a little woman, hurrying into the room, with a candle like a comet streaming in the wind, "why, lad;" and with one hand upon her hip, she gazed upon me with tender interest, "how did you get in here? Simon tells me you've walked over the tops of all the houses. You good dear!" to her husband, whose cheek she patted, "to take him in. It's just like him, sir. Simon, where are you? Pour out a good bumping glass, and give it to the young gentleman. Deary me! deary me! tch! tch! tch! do see how the sweet fellow drinks it up! Johnny Martin, do look at him. Who could have the heart to lay a finger on his head, Simon?"

Simon was at her elbow. "Help your father, my dear boy, and give me a drop; and take a little yourself. You thought he was a ghost—ha! ha! he's as like my brother's son, that went to sea, as ever two peas. I'll drink to your safe deliverance, sir," shaking her head; "oh! you're a fine youth."

"Come," said Martin, rising and stretching himself to his full dimensions, which were of a muscular compactness and development seldom witnessed, "there's something to be done, I see that. This young gentleman has been seized upon by two crimps, I suspect."

"Crimps! I'd crimp 'em, if I had 'em," cried Mrs. Martin, "the wicked cannibals! to go to inspirit away a young, fine, beautiful——"

"My dear, sit down," gently urged Martin, "and let us hear the young gentleman's account of it."

"Well, Johnny, well," returned his wife. "I'll listen to it with the greatest of pleasure. But I wish you had 'em to deal with, Johnny, that's all. What dost say, Simon?"

"I say," cried Simon, making up a prodigious fist, "I should like to have the walloping of one of 'em, let him be as big as he will."

"Sweet fellow; just like his father," said Mrs. Martin, pressing my hand. "Feel better, dear?"

"Much, I thank you; I am quite revived; and will, if you please, relate how I came here."

Hereupon, I told them how I had been thrust into the coach—my confinement at Rugby's—my escape thence—the whole with circumstantial minuteness.

"But have you any reason to suspect," inquired Martin, when his wife's exclamations had, in some degree, subsided, "that these men have been employed by some enemy? You have friends, sir, of course; have *they* any enemies—your parents, I mean; for you are too young to have made enemies yet."

"He, enemies!" cried Mrs. Martin, "they must be enemies of the whole human race that would go for to injure him. Why do you sigh, lad?"

I believe I did sigh. These were worthy creatures, I perceived, with whom I could have no reserve. Indeed, why should I? Accordingly, I related briefly the outline of my life, dwelling more particularly upon the treatment I had met with from my mother—especially exemplified in this her last and memorable performance.

The eyes of the good woman ran over during my story. When I had completed it, she pressed her son's hand, which she had been holding, between her own. "What a mother!" she said; "the world's turned topsy-turvy, I think."

Simon returned the pressure. "Father," said he, breaking out suddenly, "you may laugh at me, if you like; but if I wouldn't rather see a ghost than that lady, I wish I may never——"

Martin cut short his son's speech.

"Never mind," said he; "that's nothing to the purpose. There's something to be done, Simon. These fellows must not be let off easily. Mr. Savage," turning to me; "my name's John Martin; I'm a poor tailor, and honest as the world goes, and as folks say; my son, here, follows the same business. Will you trust yourself with us? Simon, I shall want you."

"Willingly," said I.

"None the worse for being a tailor," said Mrs. Martin, "is he, dear?—Mr. Savage, I should say; I humbly beg your pardon." (The poor woman had suddenly acquired a high notion of my greatness.) "He has been a soldier, sir; and a better soldier never served Queen Anne (God bless her memory!). Many a long day's march has he toiled—he has."

Martin smiled gravely. "Simon, help Mr. Savage on with your old top coat, and second-best hat. All the better if they don't fit him; and, mother, one of my old check cravats."

He walked round me when this addition to my apparel was effected. "No one would know him," he observed. "Now, my pistols."

"Don't run into any mischief, and do no murder, Johnny," cried his wife. "Simon, take care of him," in an undertone; and to her husband, "Don't let Simon get a-fighting."

"Won't I though," said Simon, "if there's occasion? Father'll be by."

"He's a very Hannibal, sir; and so is Martin," said the woman, confidentially. "I can always trust 'em together; and good reason—they never go out on any thing they need be ashamed of."

Martin having stowed away his pistols, put on his hat and buttoned his coat, stooped his tall figure that his wife might kiss his cheek. Simon did likewise. "Now, take care—take care, my men, will you?" saluting them affectionately.

I also put in for a salute. "God bless you, good Mrs. Martin."

"And *will* you?" cried the woman, her eyes sparkling; "you're a dear, condescending, affable young gentleman—that you are. And God bless *you*, too. Won't you come and see us again?"

"Indeed I will," said I; "and often."

"We are ready, sir," cried Martin, with military precision; and following Martin and Simon, and followed by the woman's good wishes, I took my way down stairs.

CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY IS PRESENTED TO RICHARD SAVAGE OF TURNING THE TABLES UPON HIS ARCH-ENEMY. HE DOES AN ACT UPON WHICH HE FORGETS, OR OMITS, TO APPLAUD HIMSELF; AND FOR WHICH, PERHAPS, SOME PORTION OF THE WORLD WILL HARDLY COMMEND HIM.

WHEN we got into the street, Martin faced about. "Simon," he said, "stand by this young gentleman, while I step to the roundhouse. I shall be back in a few minutes."

"He's gone for the watch," said Simon; "they're not of much use when fighting's about; but when it's all over, and one of 'em lugs out his tipstaff, people get frightened, and go with 'em like lambs."

Martin speedily returned with three of these auxiliaries. "Now, then," he observed, taking me by the arm, "if the sailors should be there, we shall be a match for them, I dare say. Keep by me, sir; and should the rogues fall to blows, leave them to us. You can be of no service, and might come to harm."

Thanking the considerate and friendly tailor, I promised obedience to his orders; and we walked up to the door of the "Ship afloat," for that, Simon whispered to me, was the sign of the house.

"Slouch your hat, and draw your coat well about you, and follow me. Come, Simon. Comrades, stand here for one moment. I have a word to say to the landlord."

These several directions were given to us by Martin with great promptness.

"Rugby," he said, as he, Simon, and myself entered the passage, "you have two persons in your back parlour; they are waiting for two sailors."

Rugby stared, and scratched his cheek, and stared again. "Why, Master Martin, there are, as I may say, two——"

"I know there are," interrupted Martin; "I want to see them."

"Lord bless me! they're only two friends of mine—you don't know 'em," said Rugby.

"Perhaps not," returned Martin; "but I want to make their acquaintance. In return, I'll introduce you to three friends of mine. Now, Rugby," he continued, as the watch came forward, "you're a ruined man if you don't keep a quiet tongue in your head. One word, and your two friends and you shall be tried together next sessions. You've got a young gentleman above stairs?"

Rugby's face turned as pale as the face of a bacchanalian can well do.

"My heart and heyday!" he stammered—"a young gentleman! No, I haven't."

"You say truth, and I'm a liar," said Martin. "Not a word more. Send in a small bowl of punch, and mix one for these three gentlemen;" and he led the way towards the back parlour.

"Simon, my good fellow," cried Rugby, catching the youth by the sleeve, as he prepared to follow—"what does the governor mean?"

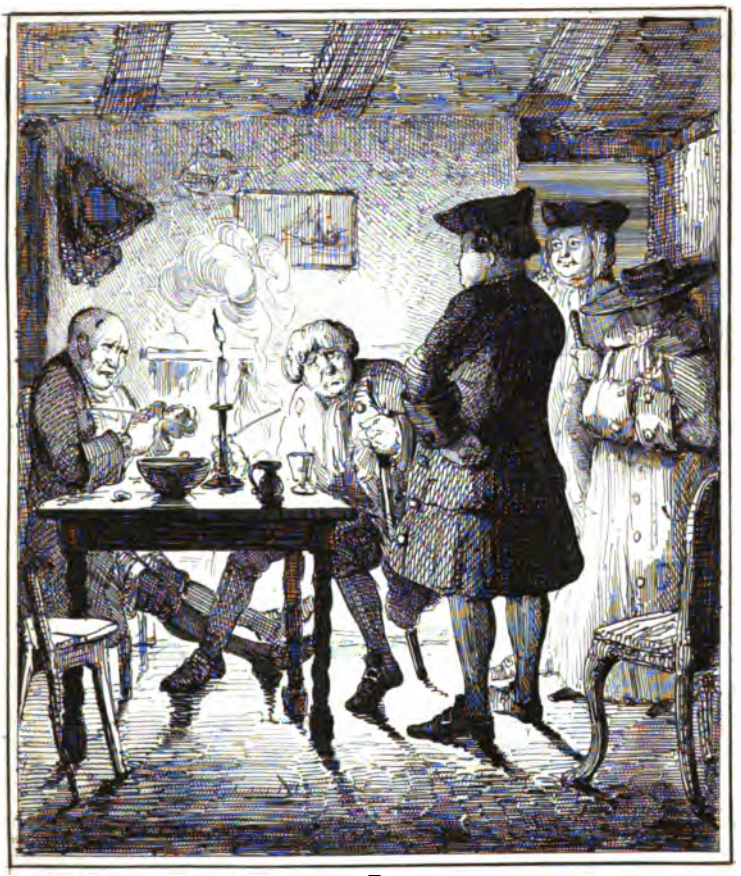
"Eh? mean!" cried Simon, staring him in the face, "why hadn't you asked him yourself, Master Rugby? I don't carry his answers in my mouth, I can tell you;" and he flung from him.

Martin had laid hold upon the handle of the door. "Come between us," he whispered to me; "and don't let them see your face if you can help it." So saying, the door was thrown open, and in we marched, Simon closing it after him.

Watson and his friend Bill were disporting themselves over a bowl of punch and pipes of tobacco, and, on our entrance, hastily re-arranged themselves in their chairs, with the aspect of men who had been suddenly interrupted in a confidential chat.

"A fine night, gentlemen," observed Martin, as we took our seats.

"Is it?" cried Watson with a tremendous oath. "It may be. Isn't it a d— strange thing, Bill, that we can't have this room to ourselves? Here, Rugby!" hammering with an empty tankard upon the table.



"He's particularly engaged," said Martin.

"Then go out, will you?" cried Watson.

"Be off—you'd better," said Bill. "Why did you come in here?"

"Because we chose," replied Simon, with a stare of audacious defiance.

"Perhaps," returned Bill, "we may choose to turn you neck and heels out; the young 'un with a toothache into the bargain."

"Perhaps," retorted Simon, with an air of indifference, drumming his knuckles on the table, "unless you've done a very light day's work, you mayn't be able."

At this moment, a bowl of punch was brought in by a squalid wench.

"Tell Rugby we want him, and must have him," exclaimed Bill.

"Yes, sir."

"Somebody else wanted him, and has got him," said Simon, grinning.

"Silence," cried Martin, frowning at his son. "We'll take a glass each, and to business. That's good," taking off a glass, and smacking his lips.

"Better than your company," said Watson.

"I dare say you think so," returned Martin. "Now, Mr. Watson and Mr. Bill, I am come to fetch away the young gentleman you have got under lock and key in the top room."

The fellows gazed at each other in astonishment, when they heard their names pronounced; and by the time Martin had finished the sentence, were perfectly dumbfounded.

"I am sent," resumed Martin, "by a certain lady—you know whom I mean——"

"You are?" cried Watson, "why, to be sure, you must be. What does she want now? any thing amiss?"

"Nothing; only she has changed her mind about him. You don't know her so well as I do—she often changes her mind; and yet, I wonder she should have boggled at this, because she had done it so snugly. No one the wiser. Why, she tells me, that even you don't know her name."

"Don't we, though?" cried Bill—"Mrs.——" he stopped.

"B——" said Martin.

"R, e, double t. I can spell, master," cried the other.

Martin glanced at me and then at his son. "What do you think of that fellow?" he enquired of Simon, pointing to Bill.

"Nothing of him," cried Simon.

"Very well," rising, "Mr. Watson, we lose time. I must have this young gentleman at once. Rugby tells me you have the key of the door."

"I have," answered Watson—"but no bubble, Mr.——, what's your name? How do I know Mrs. Brett sent you? Perhaps Watkins, who employed us, has been bought over by the lad's friends? Where's your authority?"

"I have left it with Rugby. But are you sure you have got him safe?"

Watson and Bill were amazingly tickled at this.

"Safe?" cried the former, laughing heartily. "Are you sure St. Paul's hasn't run away with the Monument?"

"Why," returned Martin—"I know the room well. Isn't there a door behind the bedstead? and doesn't it lead into the little garret; and isn't there a window in the garret? and couldn't a young fellow get out of the window, and crawl over the tiles, and get into another window, and come and tell *me* all about it? and isn't this the young fellow?" knocking off my hat and disclosing my face, "and don't you think you'll be made to swing at Tyburn for all this?"

The men, staring at me in wild amazement, started up, overturning the table, and would have made off. Watson, however, was seized on the instant by the magnanimous tailor, and pinioned against the wall with his strong hands as effectually as though he had been fastened thereto by staples of iron.

In the meantime, Bill was encountered by the as valorous, but less practised Simon. "You can't come this way, good sir," he exclaimed, thrusting the other back with his shoulder.

"Take that then," cried Bill, aiming a blow with the

lightning rapidity of a finished bruiser at the face of his antagonist,—a blow which, had it taken effect, must inevitably have dislocated his jaws.

"What are you at, Simon?" cried Martin; "have you got him?"

"Shall have him in a moment, father," replied Simon. "I owe you one, Mister, for that:" and rushing forwards, and closing with the other, he lifted him by main strength from the ground, threw him over the upset table, and falling heavily upon him, held him to the earth.

"Now, Savage, call in the watch. It's all over with them."

I opened the door. The worthy functionaries were already ranged on the outside, and now walked in.

"You are our prisoners," said the foremost, with a voice of authority.

The fellows were at once handed over to the secular arm, and attempted no further resistance. Lest, however, they should please to do so on their way to the round-house, the rope, found in Bill's pocket, was brought into requisition; and, with their hands bound, they were led off.

"Bother that Bill—didn't the other call him Bill?" said Simon; "if I hadn't closed with him at once, he'd have given me what I shouldn't have liked. He'd have thrashed me in no time. Whenever, Mr. Savage, you've one of these fellows to deal with, run in upon him, and down with him."

"I will, Simon, if I can," said I.

He grinned. "Ay—that's it—there are two at the game, I know. Never mind: I mean, do as well as you can."

We accompanied our captives to the round-house, and our charge being duly entered against them, they were locked up for the night.

"Now, Mr. Savage," said Martin, as we retraced our way, "you will stay with us to-night. You will be wanted early to-morrow morning to go before the justice, that these fellows may be committed."

I had not thought of this, which included another consideration of moment. "I know the friend with whom I lodge," said I—"and he is a true friend, Mr. Martin—will

be extremely anxious to learn what has become of me. I think I had better go home to-night. I will be sure to be with you to-morrow morning in time."

"As you please," returned Martin; "I know what it is to be kept in suspense. In that case, Simon and I'll see you on your way. Do you know where you are?"

I answered that I was entirely ignorant of the place.

"You are in Wapping," said he. "Come, when we get to Tower Hill, I think I can easily direct you."

As we walked along, I was profuse in my acknowledgments of the protection he had rendered me. He deprecated thanks for so common a service, as he termed it, and we proceeded together in silence. Martin apparently in deep cogitation—I busy, likewise, with my own thoughts, and Simon silent, I suppose, because we were so.

When we arrived upon Tower Hill, Martin halted, and gave me minute directions touching my route homewards. "Now, Simon," said he, "bid Mr. Savage good night."

"One word," said I; "we must not part so. I hope you will forgive me, Mr. Martin; but I cannot leave you, even for a few hours, without pressing you to accept some recognition more substantial than mere words, of the sentiment I entertain of gratitude for your timely aid, so promptly rendered; which perhaps has saved my life." I drew out my purse.

Martin laid his hand upon mine, and answered with great gravity, "Young gentleman, when a person requires my protection from an enemy, I no more think of the length of his purse than of his enemy's height. If your purse," he added, smiling, "were as short as Simon's memory is sometimes, when he's thinking of Kitty Johnson, and your enemy as long as that is," pointing to his shadow which lay before him on the ground about a rood in length, "it would be all one to me. When I enter upon a business, I go through with it to the best of my ability."

I found it would be useless and offensive to urge him further. I turned therefore to his son. "At all events, Simon," I began.

Simon tugged himself away from me abruptly. "I

won't take it, I tell ye—I won't take it. I don't let myself out to hire. I'll shake hands, if you like."

This was done with great cordiality on both sides.

"Well—good night, sir," said Martin. "To-morrow morning?"

"Stay a moment," said I. "Do you know, Martin, I fear, after all, this will prove an awkward business. I have been thinking of it as we came along. The lady, the person who has endeavoured to make away with me, is my own mother."

"I have been thinking of that, too," said Martin; "but I didn't like to speak of it. You cannot prosecute, can you? What's to be done?"

"To say the truth," I replied, "it is not so much from any tenderness I am affected by towards her that I feel the awkwardness of my position, as from consideration for another. I tell you," I added vehemently, "to see her hanged by the neck would cause me little concern. I *could* see it, sir."

Martin stared; and Simon said,—

"No, no, you couldn't."

"Your spirits have been greatly agitated," said Martin, after a pause; "a night's rest will do you good. You will think differently—and better—to-morrow morning."

"In the meanwhile, let me tell you," said I, "that I am chiefly perplexed by the reflection that her husband, who is I believe a worthy man, may be brought into disgrace by his wife's infamy."

"There is, then, a Mr. Brett?" asked Martin.

"Colonel Brett is her husband," I replied.

"Colonel Brett!" exclaimed Martin; "I know him well; and a most excellent officer and gentleman he was, and I dare be sworn, is. A soldier, young gentleman, cannot bear dishonour. You must—*we* must contrive some means of hushing this matter up."

"Will you go with me to-morrow morning to him?" said I.

"It must be very early. I am bound to appear against the men, and shall be compelled to attend."

In a word, I gave him my direction; and it was settled that he should call for me on the morrow.

"Her husband has saved her," I said, as I shook him by the hand.

"Or her son would," he replied. I was not so sure of that. I *am* not so sure of it.

When I left Martin, I hastened to a tavern, which I had descried while I was talking to him, and which was at the corner of Tower-street. Here I procured two glasses of right Nantz to quiet my spirits, and recruit my strength. These I despatched speedily; and in less than an hour found myself at the door of Ludlow's lodging.

On the following morning Martin was at the door to the minute. Ludlow received him with marks of uncommon gratitude.

"I have brought you your hat, sir," said Martin; "your cravat and handkerchief are still flying from the chimney like a flag of triumph. How you could accomplish your enterprise, I cannot conceive. It made my wife ill to look out of the window. I pointed out to her the way you must have come."

"And it makes me ill to think of it," said Ludlow, "my good and excellent friend to a persecuted and deserving lad. He's a gentleman born, Mr. Martin."

"I have heard his story," returned Martin, and he related circumstantially every thing that had passed on the previous evening, which, although Ludlow had made me communicate it to him before he went to bed, his ears drank in as eagerly as before.

We were not long before we reached Colonel Brett's house. He was not yet stirring.

"Tell your master," said I, to the footman, "that my business is pressing, and will not admit of a moment's delay. My name is Savage—Richard Savage. I *must* see him."

"He won't let you, I'm certain," replied the servant. "I shall only get myself into trouble by disturbing him. I won't go up to him, that's flat. I won't go."

"You had better," said I, "unless you are tired of your service, and wish me to do your office."

"I once helped to turn you out of this house, young master," said the man, grinning: "must I do it again?"

"I shall help to have you kicked out, you rascal," I exclaimed. "That livery will be on another man's shoulders in less than four-and-twenty hours, if you do not call your master immediately."

"You had better go," urged Martin; "as for laying a finger upon this young gentleman—do you see this?" showing his enormous fist. "Ay, you may call your fellows—if I don't scatter half a dozen of 'em!" He shook his head knowingly, an eloquent conclusion that was not lost upon the footman.

"Well, if I do wrong, it's your fault, not mine," he said, as he went up stairs. He returned presently. "Master's jumped out of bed, and's coming down in a devil of a passion. I wouldn't be in your shoes for a trifle."

"Yours are handsomer; but mine'll do," said Martin. "I suppose these fine chairs were made to sit upon," and he took a seat.

The colonel descended the stairs in a fume. He halted at the bottom. "Walk this way, youngster; I'll settle your business presently. But whom have you got there?" advancing towards us. "What huge congregation of bones and muscles is this? Where did you pick up this Patagonian?"

"I'm no Patagonian," said Martin, drawing himself up to his full height, and elevating his chin; "I'm a poor tailor, your honour, and have been a soldier."

"A tailor and a soldier!" cried the colonel. "Hercules with his distaff! March this way, Ajax Snip. Savage—what's your name? come on."

He led us into a back room, and, having seated himself, "Now, child, if you recount any more fables, such as the one I listened to at Button's, it shall be the worse for you. What do you mean by disturbing me at this untimely hour? Do you know," he added sternly, "that Lady Mason will not countenance your falsehoods? Where's your Burridge? he is not forthcoming."

"That Lady Mason will not countenance falsehoods," I

replied, "I should be very glad to believe. That she does, I know. I am sorry she will not lend her countenance to truth, which, colonel, ere long—you may smile, sir—and turn up your lip because I am a lad—which, I say, ere long she shall be made, if not to countenance, to confess."

"Gently with his honour," said Martin—"gently."

"I have not yet heard from Mr. Burridge," I continued; "but he will be forthcoming, I trust; or the treachery of somebody has been only too successful."

"Who is that somebody?" exclaimed the colonel; "I know whom you mean. But why am I kept here—what do you want?" striking the table, "I heard you were gone to sea."

"I have not yet taken water," said I. "My destination was to have been Jamaica. My mother, however, omitted to furnish me with letters of recommendation, which, proceeding from her, must needs have been most advantageous to me."

"D——ation!" cried the colonel, in a rage, "the insolence of this boy!"

"We lose time," said Martin, drawing out his watch. "Tell his honour, sir, at once, what we have come about."

"Listen with patience to me for two minutes, and you will alter your tone, colonel," said I; and I related the particulars of my seizure and escape.

The colonel sat for some time after I had concluded, alternately gazing at Martin and me, his hand clasping his chin.

"It won't pass," he said, at length; "it won't pass. Nothing will do for you, you young vagabond, as I told you in my letter, but Bridewell and the whipping-post. Here—you make it to be believed that you are gone, or going, to sea, and get this great tailor to eke out a wretched story concocted in that shallow brain of thine, that Mrs. Brett has caused you to be made off with by crimps. Who are you, fellow?" to Martin; "you say you have been a soldier—where? in what regiment? under whom? How do I know that you are not a thief? Speak! are you an honest man, or a thief?"

Martin turned fiery red at the question. "I hope,

colonel," he brought out at last, "I know the difference between a high gentleman like you, and myself; and I trust I have becoming respect for the cloth; but, by G—, sir, if any other man had asked me that,"—he paused for a moment—"why shouldn't I say it? he had never asked me a second time. Colonel Brett," he added, "I can bring many to speak to my character if necessary; but it is *your* character that is now in question. It is, sir. If you have been conniving with the lady, your wife, to make away with this young gentleman, which I cannot help suspecting from the passion you were in—and I never knew a man in a passion that wasn't in the wrong—then," with an oath, "I'm a better man than you, though I'm a poor tailor, and you a rich gentleman."

How mean the fine gentleman looked at that moment, and how much like a man the tailor!

"Under whom have you served?" inquired the colonel.

"Colonel Cutts," said Martin, shortly.

"Then you knew Captain Steele?"

"That I did," cried Martin, his brow clearing, "and an excellent gentleman his honour was—and he knew me, too. Ask him, sir, if he remembers Corporal John Martin? I warrant you. But—" turning to me, "tell the colonel the rest. Time draws on apace."

"What more" inquired the colonel. "The bolster, I suppose."

"My story requires no bolstering, sir," I said; "we have proofs;" and I told him of the capture of the two men, and of their confession.

He was greatly troubled, and arose and paced the room, his hands clasped behind him. "Wait a moment," he said at length, waving his hand, and he hurried from the apartment.

He came back, after some time, and in disorder; his face flushed—his eyes kindled.

"Martin," he said, "this matter must be stopped; we must buy off these two fellows. What money will effect, must be done."

"Then, sir," began Martin, "you are now convinced that the lady was——"

I checked him.

"Why, as to that," he continued, "the men are down in the headborough's book, and I don't know. Money will go a great way, to be sure."

"How much?" said the colonel.

"Why, perhaps, a couple of guineas might satisfy the watch."

The colonel drew out his purse. "Take five; and here are five for yourself. I am sorry I said what I did."

"Your honour is too good to say so much now," cried Martin. "As for the money, I won't touch it."

"I insist upon it," said the colonel. "What! mutinous, corporal?" He pressed his hand. "Come, you will greatly oblige me."

Martin said no more, but pocketed the money.

"Then you think I may venture to hope that I shall hear no more of this d—— ugly business?" inquired the colonel.

"I think your honour may. If we don't come forward, they will be discharged; but I am known, and unless I crossed the headborough's hand he would have me before his worship to tell all I knew."

"Colonel," said I, "I am a party in this matter. How do you know that I am satisfied with this arrangement?"

He drew me aside. "Child," said he, "what I do not say to thee now, you must take it for granted that I feel. Dost think I am not confoundedly ashamed? You must call upon me in a few days. What will satisfy you for the present?"

"I want no hush-money," I replied; "but I must have some assurance that there shall be no repetition of this."

"That I make you," said the colonel; "on my word of honour, as a gentleman, Mrs. Brett *shall* not—indeed, she has solemnly promised that she will not attempt it a second time. You hesitate?"

"No—I will take my chance, colonel."

"You're a fine fellow. Something shall be done for you. Leave it all to me."

"I expect nothing—I hope nothing," I replied. "From

this time forth, money is out of our question. But her son I am, and will be, and will be known to be. Perhaps, after all, the honour of the relationship between us will not be on my side. The advantage will be on neither."

He shrugged his shoulders. "Fight it out between you," said he; "I am on half-pay, and do not intend to fight any more battles."

I left Martin at the colonel's door, after promising that I would very shortly call upon him.

I found Ludlow with his wife, and related all that had passed between the colonel and myself, and the arrangement that had been entered into. He did not seem at first greatly to approve it, but reconciled himself to it after a short time.

"It will touch her," said he, "to be obliged to you—to be beholden to your mercy! Come, that's something. What she feels now, is a little of our vengeance. Don't you see? How her heart is torn different ways at this moment, and no way the right one."

"But stop!" he said, after a long pause; "I don't half like what you've done. This will make her hate you all the more. What's the worth of the colonel's word of honour? that!" snapping his fingers; "how could he restrain her if she had a mind to try it again? And she will. Once wicked—always wicked. The bad can never be ashamed or reclaimed."

"I am sorry," he said to me, some time afterwards, when we were alone, "that I blurted out that about the wicked, before Jane. It might have hurt her feelings, which I'm sure I didn't intend. She didn't appear to remark it, did she?"

"Not at all," I answered.

But she did. I had involuntarily turned my eye towards her when Ludlow spoke; and how it stung the woman, *her* eye, which was bent upon her husband, told me plainly. It was an expression not to be described. That I remember it so well—but I will not anticipate.

CHAPTER XI.

AN OLD FRIEND WITH AN IMPROVED APPEARANCE AND IN A NEW CHARACTER. WITH AN INSTANCE OF COMPLICATED WICKEDNESS, WHICH, IT IS TO BE HOPED, HAS NOT OFTEN BEEN PARALLELED.

One morning, Mrs. Greaves informed me that a tall and very fine gentleman had just got out of a chair, and was waiting in the passage, desirous of seeing me. I went down, looking to behold no less a personage than Colonel Brett. He was, indeed, a very fine gentleman, but much taller and less corpulent than the colonel.

"Ah, Dick, you dog," said he, seizing me by the waist; "here I am at last, at your service."

"Mr. Burridge!" I exclaimed, in astonishment, surveying my old master, who was dressed in the height of the mode, and might have appeared in Pall Mall as a man of the first figure.

"Yes," said Burridge, divining the cause of my surprise; "a metamorphosis, I grant you. Ah, well! a diamond must sparkle, Dick, or who'll look upon it? I called where your letters told me I should find you, and saw an atom, who at length informed me where you were. Who is that little grig?"

"His name is Myte," said I. "I have been living with him for some months."

"Ah well!" cried Burridge; "living with him, and not yet dead! He'd kill me in no time. And so you're with Ludlow, he says. He called him something."

"Jeremiah Woful, I dare say."

"The name—and not a bad one," said Burridge, laughing. "The diminutive tells me he believes he has wronged you, and wants to sing his palinode. But don't you ask me up stairs?"

I led the way thither.

"Were you not surprised you did not hear from me?"

he said, following me. "I conclude so from your having sent me two letters. Goose! not to remember that I'm never at home during vacation. Do you think I'm to stalk about the empty school-room, with false quantities and nonsense verses ringing in my ears, or play at pushpin in a corner with old Metcalfe?"

Ludlow was standing at the door when we reached the landing, and greeted the visitor with a bow of profound respect.

"My good friend, I am very glad to see you," said Burridge, extending his hand. "Nay, let us walk in and sit down. A lady here?" turning to Ludlow.

"My wife," said Ludlow, confused.

"I beg pardon—I was not aware——" began Burridge.

"Mrs. Ludlow, will you retire for a short time?" interrupted Ludlow, handing her from the room.

"Why, what occasion for that?" cried Burridge; "I didn't know you were one of the blest."

"No, sir," replied poor Ludlow, looking down upon his thumbs.

"Ho, ho!" cried Burridge, "I take you now. A recent match. Your most obedient. Oh, Ludlow!" shaking his finger. "Pray call back the bride. I wouldn't for the world I should have made her run away."

Ludlow stood in evident distress. I walked up to Burridge, and whispered—"I will tell all by-and-by. It is a sad story, sir."

"Let us sit down," said Burridge. "And so, my good friend, your secret's out at last; and Dick doesn't appear to be much the better for it. Mrs. Brett is his mother—the daughter of Lady Mason—um."

"We look to you to help us in this difficulty, sir," said Ludlow.

"There is no difficulty in the case," said I. "We merely wish you, sir, to certify that I was committed to you by Lady Mason. Perhaps you have her letter?"

"Yes, sir," said Ludlow; "and you can vouch——"

"One at a time," cried Burridge. "I have Lady Mason's letter by me. Here it is. It is plain enough.

I wish yours, Dick, had been as precise. They contain an infinite quantity of nothing. Mrs. Brett was the divorced Countess of Macclesfield——"

"Oh! she was," said Ludlow, between his teeth.

"And Lord Rivers——"

"His father. Yes, Mr. Burridge; his own father. And Lady Mason employed me——"

"I know all that," said Burridge. "Where, then, is the difficulty? Lady Mason's word——"

"She disowns him," cried Ludlow, with a flourish in the air; "and has turned me away—her servant from a boy—because I will see justice done to him. And I will. Oh, sir! can you believe in human wickedness?"

"I can," replied Burridge. "He must be a sceptic indeed, who, at my age, will not believe in that. But how is this, Dick, my boy, that they reject a fellow like you? D—n 'em (I don't often swear), they've neither taste, spirit, nor humanity."

"Neither, sir," said Ludlow; "oh yes; the woman has spirit. I wish I had its equal; I'd spirit her—I'd make her all spirit."

Burridge regarded him for a moment, earnestly. "Come," said he, turning to me; "let us hear every thing that has happened to you since you left Saint Albans."

I entered into a minute detail of all that had occurred.

"Ah well!" said he, when I had concluded, "a complicated piece of business, truly. Colonel Brett, I take it, is nobody in the matter. Nevertheless, we must see him. Come along."

"And are you going to see Colonel Brett, sir?" asked Ludlow.

"Indeed I am."

"Bless you, sir," cried Ludlow; "you won't carry off Richard, sir, as you once threatened?"

"I don't know that I shall not," replied Burridge; "but not at present, and perhaps not at all. You will see us again shortly."

A coach was called, and we got into it. Ludlow's face looked radiant as we drove off.

"What ails that man, Ludlow?" said Burridge: "he's greatly altered since I saw him last."

"Do you think so?" said I. "I have not observed it. In what respect do you think him changed?"

"I don't mean that he looks ill, but his manners are strangely different. There's a quickness and an angularity about his motions—and his eyes—pshaw! how shall I describe them? they seem as though they were changing sockets every moment. What is this sad story you were to tell me?"

Burridge was silent for some minutes after I had finished the narrative of my poor friend.

"My wife—my Harriet," he said, at length, half musingly, "is a saint in heaven—I trust, and I believe it—but—tell me this, Richard—no, you are too young to answer the question—is this man to be despised for a fool, or to be commended as a true Christian hero—a Christian hero, such as Richard Steele never dreamed of? Upon my soul, Ludlow *is* a hero. I shall love him for it the rest of my life. Poor, poor fellow! And your mother!—

> 'A ministering angel shall he be
> When she lies ——'

I was about to say something, Dick; but it would have been Shakspeare's, not mine."

"'Howling,' you were about to say, sir," said I, laughing; "I remember the passage. Indeed, I think she will."

"Hush! young man," said Burridge gravely; "you must not talk thus. Remember, Mrs. Brett is your mother."

"I do," said I, with bitterness, "and that I am her son."

Burridge's reply was prevented by the stoppage of the coach.

We sent in our names, and were requested to walk into a private room. The colonel presently made his appearance, and upon seeing Burridge, burst into an exclamation of surprise.

"What! Frank!" said he, "is it possible?" embracing Burridge with warmth; "and turned pedagogue, too! Why, we thought you were gone——"

"Where little children are most welcome?" said Burridge, returning his friend's embrace indeed, but with something of constraint in his manner. "No, I am yet living, as you see. I have to thank myself for it."

"Well, now, now," returned Brett—"let me know what you have been doing with yourself all the long years since the town lost you."

"The town took little pains to find me again, I imagine," said Burridge, with a passing smile—there was a dash of scorn in it—"for the inquiries *you* made, Colonel Brett, I am sure I ought to thank you."

The colonel was slightly disconcerted.

"It is not the way of the world," said he, lightly, "to interfere with any man's disposition of himself. I hope," he added, assuming a stately air—"you have found your plan answer your purpose."

"It has," returned Burridge; "my purpose was to retire from a world in which I could no longer maintain the station I had held. I know the great world too well, and its ministers, who are at the same time its minions, not to be sensible that a shoe-black will meet with more consideration than a gentleman in distress."

"Humph!" said the colonel.

"I know not in what estimation pedagogues are held amongst you," resumed Burridge, "but here I am. You had not seen my countenance again, I can assure you, but for this pupil of mine. Let us go at once into his case."

"Sit down, child," said the colonel, turning to me. "You know not, Mr. Burridge, what trouble this young gentleman gives me."

Burridge returned a lofty stare.

"After what has occurred, Brett, I did not expect to hear that from you. It was your own proposition that I should wait upon you. I am here. You wanted my confirmation—here it is," handing Lady Mason's letter. "Colonel, we will be straight-forward in this business, if you please."

The colonel read the letter, and returned it without comment.

"The whipster," said he, with a yawn, "always comes in a tempest; he nearly snapt my nose off at Button's—then he brought a gigantic tailor to me, who would have made my quietus with a bare bodkin; and now, here are you——"

I began to feel a degree of contempt for this colonel, and was about to launch an angry retort, when, directing my eye at Burridge, I saw the devil gathering upon his brow.

"It seems to me," said Burridge, with forced calmness, "either that I do not see before me Colonel Brett, or that Colonel Brett supposes he does not see Francis Burridge. I'd have you to know, sir—but you do know—that I am not to be trifled with. What do you mean by connecting my name with that of a tailor?"

"There now, Frank, be quiet," cried the colonel: "I beg your pardon—I did not mean to offend you. A pinch of your snuff."

"Stand up, Richard Savage," exclaimed Burridge, rising; and he led me towards the colonel, who also arose—"Colonel Brett, is it not a shame—a d——d shame—that this young man should be treated as he has been?"

"Not by me, I give you my honour," said the colonel.

"Not by you! but by one who is responsible, and ought to be subservient to you. I protest, before God, I never heard of such barbarous cruelty——"

"You are going too far—I think, upon reflection, you will confess that," cried the colonel. "I have every disposition to do the lad justice, but it is out of my province. Mrs. Brett has always been her own mistress, and her own mistress she will remain. What reasoning will do has been tried—has failed. She will not believe he is her son."

"That word 'will' is a good one," returned Burridge. "She *will* not believe. Stuff! But she *does* believe, nevertheless. Will mustn't always have its own way. We have our wills, too. Let the lad see his mother."

"Do I stand in the way of it?" asked the colonel—"but he has seen her."

"But now," urged Burridge, "now that his—come, I must call it forbearance—has established an irresistible

claim upon her gratitude. You know what I mean, colonel. That Wapping—pah! What do you say?"

The colonel reddened.

"If he pleases," with a glance at me.

"But I do not please, sir," said I. "I have no wish to see Mrs. Brett; and I presume she has a particular desire not to see me. I hope so."

"It were hardly profitable," said the colonel. "Oil upon the flames, Frank; a battle for the sake of the bruises."

"Do you say so?" cried Burridge, quickly. "Ah, well!" elevating his eyes, and smacking his lips audibly. "Let me wait upon the lady."

"With all my heart," replied the colonel; "if she will receive you, I shall be very happy. You see I do all I can for you," shrugging his shoulders, and spreading out his palms.

He rang the bell.

"Tell Mrs. Brett that Mr. Burridge, a particular friend of mine, is desirous of a few minutes' conversation with her."

"Thank you, thank you," said Burridge; "now you shall have a pinch of my snuff—the real Musty—which our friend Steele has written so much to set the town sneezing with."

"Ah!" remarked the colonel, shaking his head—"the hours we have spent together, Frank! Dick's as brisk as ever—a boy to the last with those he loves."

The servant re-entered the room.

"Mrs. Brett will be happy to see Mr. Burridge."

"'Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards,' says the preacher," observed the colonel with much gravity, when Burridge had retired; "but men might be very easy if men would let 'em. Now you, you rogue you, will have your share of trouble, I dare say; but I think you will give it also."

"I hope I shall," I replied sharply; "in one quarter, at least, it shall be my endeavour to do so."

"Tut—tut," said the Colonel, "never encourage the

angry passions—if you wish to be happy, away with 'em; if you want to be miserable, make much of 'em—hug 'em; and they'll hug you till death, and *to* death."

The colonel now drew me into talk. To say the truth of Brett, whom I often saw at a later period of my life—he was a man of extensive, if not of profound information, of easy and agreeable manners, with a perfect knowledge of the great world with which he associated, and to which his qualities recommended him, and to shine in which, it may be added, he was especially fitted, both by nature and education. He it was who taught me—unconscious teacher!—to despise thoroughly, heartily, "those little creatures we are pleased to call the great;" to contemn the ignoble arrogance of mere rank—to scorn the self-sufficient (sufficient to nought beside) insolence of those who lay claim to honourable distinctions, which are alone due (alas! not always paid) to talent, genius, and to virtue. It is saying something for the colonel, to admit that he never brought me to despise *him*.

To return. I could not but remark, during our present talk, that the colonel omitted—I know not whether purposely—all reference to the promise he had held out to me during my former interview with him, of doing something for me. I did not refresh his memory, or alarm his prudence.

"You may take it as a signal mark of Frank Burridge's friendship for you," he said at length, drawing out his watch, "that he submits to be closeted with a lady nearly an hour on your account. There was but one woman in the world for Burridge—his wife. He could lose no more after that loss. Honest Frank! And so thou hast turned Syntaxist! How Steele will claw his periwig at that! He'll bring him into the Spectator. What shall it be? Let us see, 'Flagellifer is a man who——'"

At this moment, Burridge bounced into the room. He seized his hat and cane. "Come, Richard, let us be gone. Brett, your hand. I thank you. Good-bye."

"Well but, particulars," cried the colonel; "what has been said, what has been done?"

"You will hear all that above—more said than done, colonel."

"But where are you staying? You must have a night with us. Steele will be delighted——"

"I know he would. I love Steele—pray tell him so; but I would not for the world renew, even for an hour—ah, well!—past—past. It would make me unhappy."

Burridge was unusually taciturn as we drove back to Ludlow's lodging.

"I will tell you by-and-by," he replied to my urgent inquiries touching his interview with my mother, fixing his eyes upon me with a look of sorrowful commiseration.

When the door of the house was opened, he scrambled up stairs without ceremony, and burst into the room. Ludlow's wife was sitting by the fire, but started up in some confusion.

"Where is Mr. Ludlow, madam?" said Burridge, scanning her intently from head to foot—"I hope he is not gone out?"

"He will be here directly," she replied, in a flutter: "I will go seek him."

Ludlow, indeed, had followed us up stairs, and had witnessed Burridge's ungallant scrutiny of his wife.

"Oh, Dick," he said, drawing me aside, "you have told him. He's a moral man, and thinks I have done wrong."

"Ha! you're here," cried Burridge, turning round: "a few minutes' *private* conversation with you, if you please."

Mrs. Ludlow took the hint, and retired hastily.

"Now, Ludlow," said Burridge, walking up to him, "I feel this to be one of the most solemn moments of my life. If it be, and upon my soul it is—to me who am in no way connected with this young man—to you who are, as it were, involved with him, it must be the most solemn."

"What do you mean?" faltered Ludlow, turning very pale.

"Lay your hand upon your heart, and repeat after me, if you can, these words:—I swear, as I am a living man, as I hope for peace in this world and pardon in the next,

the young man before me is the son of Mrs. Brett—is the child committed to me by Lady Mason."

Ludlow pronounced the words calmly and distinctly. "But what is the meaning of this, Mr. Burridge?" he inquired.

Burridge laid his hand upon the shoulders of the other, and gazed into his face earnestly. "I believe you, good fellow," he said, "entirely believe you. Ah, well! worthy, honest creature." He turned aside in emotion.

"Ludlow," he resumed, "I must have five minutes' talk with you alone—not here—not in the house. Where can we go?"

"Dixon's Coffee House," I suggested.

"It is hard by, sir," said Ludlow, taking his hat.

"When I have done with him, I'll send for you, Dick. Lady Macbeth nursed her own children, she has told us. I must take her into my books, I think. Loved her husband, too. Come, come, not so bad."

I marvelled much at Burridge's present proceeding. It was altogether unlike him—this secrecy—or rather, this separate disclosure of circumstances that might be unfolded at once.

It was, however, useless to expostulate with him; for Burridge was one of those men who will have their own way, and who talk of the pig-headedness of the world.

Whilst I sat awaiting with some impatience the return of Ludlow, his wife suddenly entered the room. She had on her bonnet and cloak.

"I am going out, Mr. Savage, but shall be back in a very short time."

"Had you not better stay till Mr. Ludlow returns? I expect him every instant. You look very unwell—what is the matter?"

I sought to detain the woman; partly because I was not sure that Ludlow would approve her going out; but chiefly that there was something in her manner that awakened, not my suspicion indeed, but my curiosity. She had, it is true, gone abroad several times since her convalescence, and upon two occasions had stayed away a considerable time;

but she had explained to Ludlow's satisfaction the cause of her detention; and she had never, heretofore, left the house without his permission.

"I am sure," said I, "you are not well enough for a walk to-day. Come," I added, smiling, "you must let me play the physician"—and I placed my back against the door—"no stirring abroad to-day."

"But I must," she replied quickly; "pray let me pass you."

"No. Of what importance are a few minutes? Ludlow shall decide whether you may be trusted out."

"Trusted!" she repeated, with a momentary glance at me; for her eyes, on meeting mine, were instantly cast upon the floor. She endeavoured at composure, but vainly. I led her to a seat.

"That tall, handsome gentleman was your schoolmaster, was he not?" she said at length.

"He was."

"Mr. Ludlow tells me that he took you to see Mrs. Brett. Did you see her?"

"I did not."

"Nor Mr. Burridge?"

"Mr. Burridge did see her."

"And what did she say to him?" she asked hastily, rising from her seat.

"I don't know. He has not told me."

A rapid step was heard upon the stairs. "Lord have mercy—it's James!" exclaimed the woman, retreating to the further part of the room.

The door, at this instant, was burst open, and Ludlow rushed in headlong, his clenched hands raised, his face not pale, livid—his lips working convulsively. He could not bring forth a word for some time. At length, he cried, shrieked, rather, "Down on your knees—down on your knees—not you, hellish woman, but you, you, Richard Savage, down upon your knees and curse that bitter, bitter beast—that unthankful——"

He sprang towards her. With a piercing scream she eluded the grasp he made at her throat, and dropping a

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small box which she had concealed under her cloak, dashed past him, and ran out of the room—out of the house.

Baffled of his vengeance, I suppose—but I know not the instigation—Ludlow struck his head violently against the wall, and fell upon his knees, with a heavy groan, on the floor.

"Gracious God!" I exclaimed, bending over him, "what is the meaning of this? For Heaven's sake, tell me; I can't bear to see you thus. Dear Ludlow, get up."

He waved me from him.

"Leave me—leave me. It is not this fool's head, but this greater fool's heart that is broken—broken through—to pieces—crushed. Dig me a grave and let me crawl into it—oh! to think!" pressing his hands against his temples—"I must not think. Would I could go mad—I will go mad."

"Compose yourself," I said. "Where have you left Burridge? What has he told you? What has your wife done?"

"Done?" he exclaimed; "that which all the devils in hell are clapping their hands at. They'll have her; but they won't laugh then, when they do have her. She's too wicked for 'em. But the world will laugh at me—you amongst them. And you'll hate and curse me, too. You will, and I deserve it. Go from me. I have no friend in the world."

I was moved. "Oh yes! you have; in me you have a sincere friend. Come, let me lead you to a chair. Look up, and tell me you will be calm."

He raised his head, and gazed upon me. There was something so inexpressibly touching in his face—it was so utterly wo-begone—so full of anguish, that I could not refrain from tears.

On beholding these marks of my sympathy, the wretched man burst into a passion of weeping, so loud, so vehement, so frightful, that I became terrified. I called aloud for the Greaveses. They were at their respective posts at the head of the stairs, and now came forward alarmed, but alert for horror.

After a time the shocking paroxysm began to subside. "Leave me," he said, when they had helped him to a chair. "Go away, and leave me."

"But we shan't leave you now, till you're better," said Mrs. Greaves: "make yourself comfortable now, for the sake of the young gentleman you've almost frightened out of his seven senses. Lord ha' mercy!" in a whisper, nudging me, "I thought he'd done it—truth. I couldn't ha' cut him down in a month."

"But I could," said Greaves, who had joined his head to ours; "once, sir——"

"The room goes round with me," said Ludlow, vaguely. "Where is Richard?"

I took his hand.

"Go to Mr. Burridge, he wants particularly to see you. I should have told you before. I shall be better soon. These good people will stay with me; won't you, my friends?"

"To be sure we will," cried Mrs. Greaves; "there's a brave man. Now, cheer up, do. Have you got any brandy in the house? Go to your friend, Mr. Savage; we'll doctor him up while you're gone."

I directed Greaves to the closet, in which some brandy was to be found, and hastened to Burridge, impatient to learn the cause of Ludlow's frenzy, and wondering how it could be, that Burridge had not accompanied him home.

I found him pacing the room to and fro, swinging his watch in the air round and round.

"I was coming after you," he said, "but the sight of that other woman would have been too much for me. You have kept me waiting, and I don't like it. I've another engagement, and shall be too late. How is it—since you waited to hear it all—is the woman guilty or not guilty?"

"I hardly know what you mean," I replied; "I only know that you have told Ludlow something that has driven him well-nigh mad."

"How!" said he—"impossible. He heard what I had to say, not calmly, certainly; for what human being but must have been shocked at the cursed infamy? but he heard

me in silence. When I had finished, he took my hands between his own, and said, quietly, "Forgive me, sir, that I presume to take this liberty with you; but I feel grateful that you did not tell me this before Richard. It shall be set straight, Mr. Burridge, rely upon it," and so saying, he took his hat and went his way.

"But what did you tell him?" I inquired.

"You shall hear. Oh, Dick! if you have a drop of that woman's blood in your body, let it out, and recruit your veins with poison; it were less pernicious. Beautiful wretch! what an ugly soul it has. Why, she has been lying to me—uttering base, nasty lies—lying, the vilest meanness of which a created being can be guilty. She said you were not her son—that you are an impostor; that you had been put upon this scheme of extortion, as she called it, by Ludlow. All this I expected to hear. But she said further, that Mrs. Ludlow was prepared to swear that you were her child—that Ludlow was your father. That the woman had voluntarily confessed thus much to her. She has a paper to that effect, drawn up by herself, and signed, she said, by the woman. She offered to show it to me, but I declined to look upon it. Well, I told all this to your poor friend."

I had no room in my heart for resentment against the infamous woman at that moment—it was overflowing with compassion for Ludlow.

"Oh, sir!" said I, "that you had permitted me to be the first to hear this. I dread the consequences to the best creature breathing. I know his nature; it will go hard with him—I am certain of it."

"Stuff!" cried Burridge; "why, it cannot be true: you cannot believe it to be true?"

"That Mrs. Brett has such a paper in her possession, and that the woman has signed it, I do assuredly believe," said I; and I made him acquainted with her flight. "But it is a sorry device, and will gain credit nowhere. My face vouches for me, I believe."

"And so it does; and I don't like you the better for it. But who could have believed it possible that two such

women could exist in the same age, in the same country, and be employed in the same work—laying their two hideous hearts together, to out-do Satan? Upon my soul, it troubles me. There, go to Ludlow—comfort him. If he's a man, he will shake the creature from his memory with scorn. For the dignity of his own nature, he must do so. Upon my soul, it would go far to make a man weep, however great a philosopher he might be, to dwell upon this. I will call upon you to-night."

I hastened from him.

Reader, this Ludlow—this foolish, weak, milk-and-water man—has excited, haply, rather your contempt than your pity. I fear this; although, to tell you the truth, I have endeavoured to preserve him against the former, and to secure the latter for him. To this end I purposely forbore to record much that took place on the night in which he supposed his wife to be dying. How entirely, how tenderly he forgave her; how he wept over her, and blessed her; how, with a woman's unwearied care, he tended her till she was out of danger. Reflect, then, not so much upon his weakness, as upon her wickedness, which is of a complexion so deep, that fiction would not dare to paint it. Methinks I hear somebody whisper, who has more intolerance of fools, than wise men encourage, "the fool is worthy of his fate, and it of him." But, since prosperous fools are often smiled upon, one sigh for the wretched Ludlow!

CHAPTER XII.

RICHARD SAVAGE UNADVISEDLY REJECTS A LIBERAL OFFER, WITH AN INSTANCE OF THE TRIUMPH OF WICKEDNESS, SHOWN IN THE DISTRACTION AND DEATH OF ITS VICTIM.

On my way home, I met Mr. Greaves, who had been despatched by his wife, post haste, to fetch me.

"Oh! come along—come along, sir," said he, "or you'll

be too late. I'm sure I wonder we have escaped with our lives."

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Greaves?" I inquired.

"It's no use mincing the matter, sir; Mr. Ludlow's gone ramping mad. We can do nothing with him; but what he'd have done with us if we hadn't got out of his way, the Lord alone can tell."

"Where have you left him? Not alone, I hope?"

"Yes, sir, alone," said Greaves. "Better do himself a mischief than unoffending persons, who don't wish to be cut off in the prime of their days."

I quickened my pace. "Will you be so kind as to fetch Mr. Digby, instantly?"

He nodded his head slowly. "When you left us," he said, "Mrs. Greaves prevailed upon him to swallow a glass of brandy, which he did, and then another. And then, sir, he took her round the waist—I thought he was going to salute her—and said she was the best woman in the world—all the others were not worth a rush, he said. He seemed to harp upon the words 'rush' and 'women,' and all of a sudden, jumped up, nearly screwing off Mrs. Greaves's little finger, for he had her by the hand, and 'Where is she?' he asks. 'Why, here I am, to be sure, good sir,' says my wife. She'd better have said nothing, or something more to the purpose, sir; for his face changed dreadfully at that, and he clenched his fists; and if we hadn't scrambled out of the room and down stairs, at the hazard of our necks, it would have been 'Where's she?' and 'Where's he?' too, with a vengeance. He'd have murdered us. He was quiet when I came away. But here's Mr. Digby's shop."

"Bring him directly," said I. "Not a moment must be lost."

Mrs. Greaves, as I passed along the passage, protruded her head through the half-opened door of her own room. "You may venture up now, Mr. Savage," whispering; "it's all over by this time, I fear."

I ascended the stairs in silence, and opening the door cautiously, entered the room. Ludlow had divested him-

self of his coat and waistcoat, his cravat and wig, and was walking, or rather gliding, about the apartment with an open razor in one hand, while the other was tightly clenched upon his throat. His under jaw had fallen, and his eyes were vacant, sightless, blear. So horrible a spectacle I had never seen, and never afterwards beheld—but once.

Although in excessive apprehension of what he had already done, or might attempt to do, I approached towards, but behind, him on tiptoe, and suddenly seizing his arm, wrested the razor from his hand, which I flung to the further end of the room. This aroused him from his seeming trance. An instantaneous light shot into his eyes, and from them, as though a devil were looking out of them, and setting up a wild howl, he made up to me, and closing with me, endeavoured to drag me to the ground. I was tall and strong of my age, and the occasion needed an exertion of my whole strength. With difficulty, and after some time, I succeeded in grasping his wrists, which I held firmly.

"I have you now, infamous wretch!" he exclaimed; "you cannot escape me. You think to deceive me with your disguises, do you? But no, you have done that for the last time. Do I not know that eye—that direful face? Ho! ho! Mrs. Brett, have I found you out? You may look grim; but we must now see your heart, madam—your heart, which I mean to have out—which is hidden, but I've seen it, like a dead man's skull, in that bosom of yours."

He now redoubled his exertions, and at one time had well nigh mastered me.

"Don't you know me, Ludlow?" I cried. "I am your friend, Richard Savage. You would not harm me, I am sure of that—your friend Richard."

He paused, and stared at me. "That's true," nodding his head; "I wouldn't harm him. He's gone to Burridge, who'll take him back to St. Albans, where he'll be out of harm's way."

He suffered me to lead him to a chair.

"When I have killed the two hags," said he, "I'll dig up Bennett's grave, and tumble their carcases into it. What a mound of infamous sin there'll be then! Faugh! No

one will be able to walk through the churchyard, except me. No one will be buried in it. And I'll go and tell Lady Mason what I've done; and Dick'll come into all the property, of course—and high time he did."

Mr. Digby now entered the room, followed at a distance, and with much wariness, by Greaves and his wife.

"I know that man," cried Ludlow, starting up. "He's the man that saved her life. Tell me what a man deserves who saves a life which God has called for? I know you, Digby; stand off——"

"You know me very well," said Digby, stepping forward with professional urbanity. "Mr. Ludlow and I are very good friends—are we not? Come, my dear sir; you are not very well. Let me feel your pulse. We shall be better soon, I dare say."

So saying, he would have taken his hand; but Ludlow rapidly withdrew it, and dealt him such a slap upon the face as made him skip to the other end of the room.

"You see I know how to deal with 'em," cried Ludlow. "Ha, Dick! is that you? Sit by me. It is our turn now."

Having secured his hands, I looked towards Digby, who stood rubbing his visage as well as Greaves and his wife would permit him; that worthy pair, having pinioned his arms, stood peering into his face with looks of affectionate solicitude.

At length, Digby somewhat roughly disengaged himself from his officious comforters. "If staring at my chaps," said he, "would heal them, those huge eyes of yours would have done it before this. Step, Greaves, into the street, and call in two strong chairmen. The man's mad!"

"I thought so," said Greaves, retiring.

"I know'd it when I first clapped eyes on him," said his wife. "All the teeth loosened, sir?"

"Hang it madam, no!" said Digby. "Hold him fast, if you can, young gentleman, till the men come. Is this brandy?" helping himself to a glass. "This fastens the teeth and loosens the tongue, Mrs. Greaves. Your very good health; and may you never have such another cuff."

"Lord ha' mercy on my three poor grinders, if I was,"

said Mrs. Greaves, with a shrug. "It's as much as I can do now to get through my victuals."

Greaves now returned with two strong fellows, who, by Digby's orders, came forward and secured Ludlow. He resigned himself to them quietly, saying, "You cannot hang me till I've had my trial. I know I've done it—and there's another you'll find, if you look after her. But when judge and jury come to know all, they'll say I've done right. It can't be helped now, however."

Digby bled the poor creature so copiously, that he fainted; and having placed a strait-waistcoat upon him, he was got to bed; and a strong opiate being administered, he presently fell into a profound slumber, out of which he did not awake for many hours.

In the evening, Burridge called upon me. He was greatly distressed at the lamentable situation in which he found Ludlow.

"Ah, well!" said he, with a deep sigh, "we are not all men alike, and have not the same to bear—the weakest often the most. What says the doctor?"

"Shakes his head, sir."

"I never knew the meaning of that. It's profound—ignorance, I take it, Richard. Very safe, nevertheless. Like shaking a box without dice—you can't lose by it."

He drew me to the window, abruptly.

"Now listen to me," said he, very seriously—"I am about to make a proposal to you, which deserves your best attention. This is no place for you. Ludlow is a very worthy fellow, but he can do you no good. You must go back with me. I will prepare you for Cambridge, and you shall be sent thither at my expense. You must not be lost to me, to yourself, to the world. What do you say?"

I thanked him heartily, but declined.

"Could I leave my friend in this state?" said I; "no, that must not be. I cannot desert him."

"Desert him!" cried Burridge; "Heaven forbid I should counsel you to do that. He will recover. This is a paroxysm, and will not last. Has he no friends to look to him?"

"None in the world."

"Ah, well! so much the better, perhaps, unless they did look to *him*. Friends! I could as soon believe in the existence of ghosts."

"Then you may believe in ghosts," I replied; "I myself have seen a friend. His name is Burridge."

"You rascal!" he cried, "I won't care a straw for you, if you don't do as I please. That's *my* friendship. Come; you shall stay with Ludlow till he recovers, and then you shall come to me."

I ought to have hesitated—to have weighed his proposal. I know it. But I answered at once,—

"No, sir, it cannot be. I am grateful to you; but it cannot be."

"Why?"

"Mr. Burridge," said I, "partly you know my nature. Until lately, I did not myself know it. I am resolved, sir, bent—unalterably so—upon bringing the woman, my mother, to shame—to a sense of her own shame. To a sense of the world's scorn I will bring her, if she be lost to the other. I will not leave her, or lose her, or loose her, until she has acknowledged me. She *shall* do it. What care I for her plots or her stratagems? I can plot—and I can devise stratagems. I hate her: she shall know it—she shall feel it—she shall fear it—and then I shall despise her, and I will tell her so."

"It is shocking!" exclaimed Burridge, "to see a face so young obscured, deformed by hateful passions. What do you mean, Richard—Savage, do you call yourself—Savage, indeed! *You* hate your mother? You love her, or you would not copy her. Take care, lest she despise *you*. We cannot see ourselves above the eyes—our noblest part, the head, is hidden from us—but we can see others. She will see you. This hate is a game at which all lose. Come, come; let it go by. No one can injure a man so much as himself. I'll make you indifferent to her, and when you are, you shall tell her as much. She will like that least of all."

I turned away. "I thank you, sir."

"Why," said Burridge, "there's your old enemy—pshaw! what a fool am I! your old schoolfellow, Sinclair, is gone to Oxford, and bids fair to come forth a gentleman and a scholar. Dick, you shall be both—I will have it so."

"You distress me, sir," said I, "by pressing an obligation upon me which I cannot, which indeed I am not willing to lie under. I must not leave London. If I am to rise in the world—to make a figure in the world, as it is called—it shall be through my own exertions alone."

"So said the man who climbed the maypole while his friends were eating the leg of mutton," returned Burridge. "Richard"—drawing himself up—"I will press you no further. Ah, well! froward, not forward—spelt with the same letters, and yet the difference! Two men shall command the same talents—and one shall lie in down, the other die on a dunghill. Froward—not forward!"

He pressed my hand warmly, though apparently offended.

"Commend me to that good fellow. I hope, Richard, you may not repent your refusal of my offer."

"Shall I not see you again before you leave London?" I inquired.

"I go to-morrow morning. I would see you, if I thought you would change your mind. We change in a night sometimes."

I shook my head.

"Richard," said he, descending the stairs, "should anybody ask you where you went to school, be sure you don't tell them."

"And why not, sir?"

"You might do me an injury. You are like Shakspeare; you have little Latin and less Greek."

"An instance in my favour," said I.

He frowned sternly upon me.

"Did Briareus wear gloves, or Argus spectacles?" he demanded: "the eyes of the one were not weak—the hands of the other were not tender—and Briareus had store of hands, and Argus had eyes to spare. Get Shakspeare's eyes and hands—and brains—and I shall hold up *my* hands and eyes, and cudgel *my* brains, to know where you got

yours from, and why you hadn't made better use of them now. Go, go; I'm ashamed of you, Dick; and yet—God bless you!"

And so he left me.

I could not gainsay a word that had fallen from Burridge. I was sensible of that at the time, and almost repented me, when he was gone, that I had declined his kind and benevolent offer. But, presently, the reasons that had induced me to do so returned with added force when I visited Ludlow's bedside, and beheld the ravage, the wreck, the ruin that lay before me, and which her hands had worked. To think upon it now, I cannot calmly; yet, let me be calm—what if I am? it comes to this—may Heaven renounce me if I forgive her, till Heaven has forgiven her for that! And still, Burridge had spoken to the purpose; and, but that my cursed pride prevented it, as circumstances befell—unhappily befell—I might have availed myself of his proposal. I have since bitterly regretted that I did not; insomuch that had I been at any time of my life a weeper and wailer, and had I possessed the hands and eyes of which Burridge had spoken, every hand had been raised, with a handkerchief in each, to every eye many times. But a man's sorrows are not to be lessened this way. "All hands to the pump"—is very well; but to stop the leak is still better.

And, now, what vain regrets were these to which I acknowledge; as, indeed, all regrets are vain; and how thoroughly I despise the vanity of them, and the weakness that betrayed me into their acknowledgment. For, cannot I remember—and my memory readily thrusts them to the surface—many men whom I have known, who, with all the advantages of education that Burridge could have provided for me, have, nevertheless, approved themselves the dullest dogs that ever took nothing in and brought nothing out of their impenetrable skulls? And have I not, moreover, known men, who, with all these boasted advantages, have suffered as much as myself—or, if not so much, it was not their education that saved them. For instance, (and he will yet be known and honoured when this hand is dust

and ashes, and when this heart, which now beats kindly, full of his memory, is nought—let me, for the sake of human nature, believe this!) how do I know that Samuel Johnson—a man of great learning, of vast acquirements, of infinite sagacity, of comprehensive sense, and, above all, of the most enlarged humanity, is not at this moment (bless and preserve him wherever he may be!) wandering the long, cheerless, ungrateful streets of London, having not where to lay his head—that head which contains more than half the heads in that city, which are now reposing upon soft and luxurious pillows; and more, ten times over, than all the dreary, anxious, over-scratched polls of the poetasters whose lucubrations may have contributed to that repose.

To resume. When Ludlow awoke—perhaps I should with greater propriety say, when he ceased to sleep, he began to talk incoherently of many things, and out of many passions. Now, he was colloquial and familiar, and spoke of indifferent and trivial events; then he would burst forth into triumphant exultation over Bennett, whom he had, as he imagined, killed in a duel; then he ran on about his wife's coffin, which he had sealed up, lest she should escape the awful session of the day of judgment; of Freeman and his wife—of myself—of Mrs. Brett, with her heart in her hand, and she compelled to gaze upon it for ever and ever—no hell equal to that (this was his unvarying description of her). And there was more, much more of similar dreadful and incongruous talk, during the four days he lay in this deplorable state, which I have discharged from my memory, but which, at the time, I thought was never to be forgotten. If any thing could increase the abhorrence I already felt for his wife, it was the fact which I could not but infer from his frequent allusion to it, as though in pathetic appeal to her—of his having frequently sought her out during the last few years, and relieved her distresses.

Digby was a skilful and a humane man. He drew me aside on the third day of my friend's malady, and plainly, but with much concern, informed me that he feared his case was hopeless, and that he must be sent to Bedlam. I begged hard for further time, willing to hope (and youth

is too willing to hope) that he was not in so bad a way as he had been represented to be; and, at length, I obtained a respite of three further days.

It was on the morning of the fifth day that a change for the better was observable in him. He was for the most part tranquil, occasionally stirring, and feeling abroad as if to clutch consciousness towards him. Methought, as I hung over him, I could discover reason slowly, painfully, but surely injecting itself into his brain. Nor was I deceived. He opened his eyes, and looking intently upon me for some time, gently uttered my name. I spoke to him.

"Where have I been? Where am I? Oh! I know—that's all right—I am here. You are Richard Freeman?"

"Richard Savage, now," said I; "you remember me, don't you?"

"Richard Savage! yes—so you are"—pressing my hand; "you won't leave me?"

"I will not—but you must not talk now. The doctor will be here presently."

"The doctor! Then I have been ill! why to be sure I have—and yet—Richard, do you know, I have been living the whole of my past life over again—but all a jumble—all out of the order of time; and other terrible things have been added to it."

"Pray be quiet now," said I; "you have been very ill; but you are now better."

"Why," and he started up suddenly, but fell back again, "I have been mad—out of my senses. Oh! God of mercy! Save me from that—let me not die in that. How long have I been lying here—lying thus—mad?"

"Only a few days—compose yourself: the worst is over now."

He muttered something. "Only a few days! I would have every good Christian pray for me. Madness! madness! a strong devil that. I'll wrestle with him."

It was well for him, probably, that Digby visited him shortly afterwards. The doctor reasoned with him, or rather, gently proposed, submitted sensible ideas to his mind, which his as yet struggling reason could lay hold upon; and

by a process of delicate induction restored him to the condition of a human being. Enjoining upon him and upon me an absolute avoidance of all topics that might most likely irritate and excite him, he took his leave, with a whispered assurance to me of Ludlow's speedy recovery.

"I will strictly obey Mr. Digby," said he, during the afternoon; "but you must tell me this. Who was it that prevented me from cutting my throat?"

"No matter," said I—"you must get well as soon as you can, and then you shall know all."

"I must know that now, or I am still mad," he replied quickly. "The thing haunts me. I had a razor, I know."

"Well, well, and it was taken from you. Is not that sufficient?"

"Sufficient!" he said, reproachfully; "another moment, and I had been a lost man—a lost soul—beyond redemption. I will tell you. But, first—I did not injure her?"

"Your wife?—no."

"I am glad of it. When I got back from Mr. Burridge, I must have lost my senses; not quite lost them—they were going from me. Something whispered to me to make away with myself—to end what I felt to be insupportable. But presently, I remember that—a sense of the enormity of the act crossed—like lightning crossed—my mind. I ran and fetched my razor, intending to fling it out of the window. Can you believe it? Tell me not there are no evil spirits walking the earth, trying the strong, tempting the weak—for I *was* tempted. I could not *but* open the razor—do all I could, open it must be—open it would. And when I had opened it—my throat bare—a fiend at my arm thrusting the blade towards it—a ton of blood upon my brains—ha!" shuddering, and shrinking beneath the clothes—"it was that made me mad."

I soothed him as well as I could, and at last succeeded in restoring him to something like calmness.

And now the doctor took me aside once more.

"Mr. Savage," said he, "I fear no longer for your friend's reason; that is perfectly re-established; but I have many and great fears for his life."

"Good God! you alarm me," said I—for I had thought him considerably better;—"why, doctor, he appears to me more cheerful than I have ever known him."

"It is not the cheerfulness of this world,' said Digby. "I wish it were. No, sir, cheerful as you may think him, that man's heart is broken; to speak in a figure, the spring is snapt. Out of that bed he will never rise again."

I glanced towards it. Ludlow was asleep. It was a light, calm sleep. The tears sprang to my eyes.

'You must permit me to ask a question," resumed Digby, "for I take an interest in my patient. The lady I attended was his wife—so the people below have told me. May I ask why she is not here? She must be sent for."

Wherefore should I not publish the woman's infamy? I told Digby every thing.

"O Lord! O Lord! bless us and save us," cried he; "I thought from what he said when I got it on the chaps, that there was something amiss. Why, sir, this is a very sad story, and will make me pray on my pillow to-night. I would rather have killed her for nothing than be paid handsomely for saving an honest woman. His wife has killed him, sir, as surely as though she had given him poison. Many a murder done without lead or steel. I have known many in my time; and the murderers go to church, and are made overseers, and sit on juries, and go to see their betters hanged; eh? eh?—true;" with his finger to the side of his nose. "Now here is the case of a woman. What will you lay she doesn't turn religious one of these days, and consort with snufflers and raisers of eyes, and talk of the wickedness of the world, of which she will be able to talk knowingly? What! your face seems to say she's too far gone for that. Well, Death will reach her at last; and come too soon for her, though he come at doomsday."

My heart was heavy when Digby left me, and I sat down by Ludlow's bed-side.

"How do you feel now?" I inquired, when he awoke. There was a serenity, almost angelic, upon his countenance.

"Better than ever I did in my life, my dear and constant friend Dick, who are ever near me," he replied; "so

light, so airy, as it were. Why, I feel as though I should be wafted into the air, if I were to attempt to walk. I have been asleep; but what a dream has my life been! All passing away—well; so that you were not left behind, I should be quite happy. If an humble, ignorant man, like myself, might presume to advise you—to guide you, Richard——"

"You shall do so—oh, Ludlow!"

"No, I might be wrong, after all. *I* guide! *I* advise! What, then, brought me to this, my death-bed? My wisdom? Will human presumption never have an end, Dick?" He added, more calmly, "I wish to see Mr. Myte."

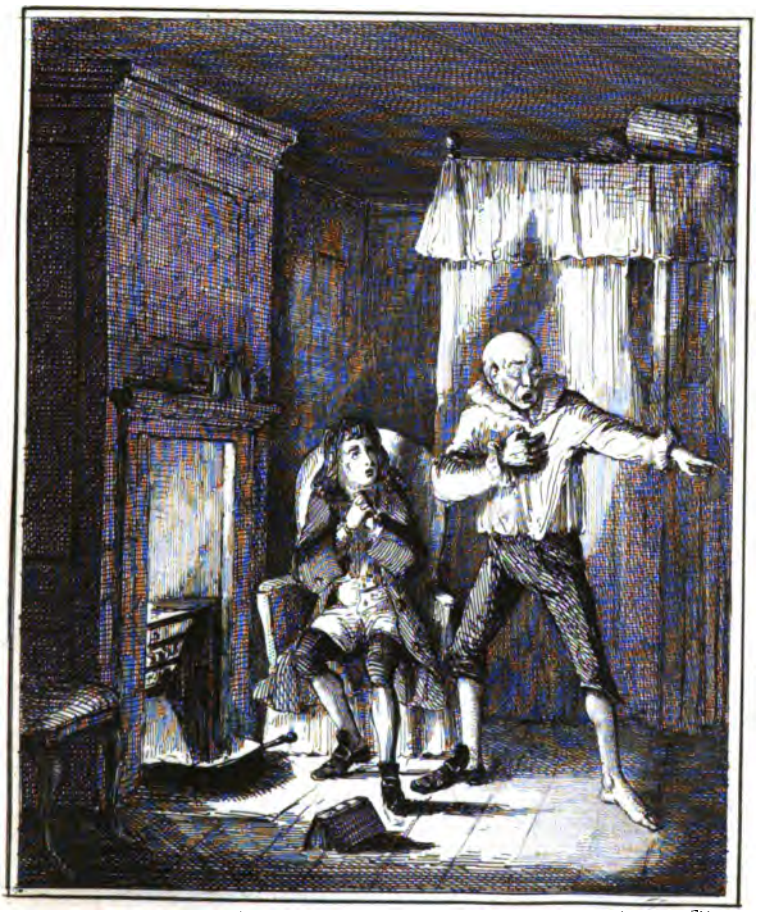
"Shall I fetch him? Will not to-morrow do? It is too late, to-night."

"To-morrow will do, I dare say; but I will tell you now why I wish to see him. The money I have saved is in his hands. It was honestly got, and will be properly left—to the grandson of my dear mistress—for dear she is to me, who had been nothing without her."

I was about to expostulate; for, to say the truth, I felt I had no claim to the money.

"I have no relations in the world," laying his hand upon my arm; "if I had, it might be different. I shall leave my wife nothing, for, if I were, it would be misspent. You must know that when she first went wrong—I can talk calmly of it now—it hurt me very much, and my mind was turned to a consideration of the influence of bad example upon young minds. I had, even then, saved some money. Well, I lodged it in Mr. Myte's hands, and with it a will, devising the whole of it, whatever the sum might be that I had accumulated when I died, to the Society for the Reformation of Manners; and many a joke has the pleasant little man made at my expense, on account of my will, which I now wish to cancel. He can tell me in a moment the exact amount I have in his hands. In the mean while, take all that is in the house—in the box, I mean, which was picked up. I almost wish she had taken it with her. Poor thing! But all that is gone by."

I insisted upon remaining with him the whole of that



Sudden Death.

London Richard Bentley & Son 1896

night. I had a book which I particularly wished to read. He was, at length, prevailed upon to let me stay with him.

After he sank to sleep, I drew to the fire, and read for several hours. Unused, however, to sitting up at night, (then, not since,) I dropped to sleep. It was what Shakspeare calls, with wonderful happiness of phrase, the "dead waste" of the night, when I was awaked by a slight noise —a noise as of something, or somebody near me. I opened my eyes suddenly and looked up. A figure—it was Ludlow —stood before me. Merciful God! I could not shriek. No face of living man was ever so shocking! Yet, as I gazed upon it, it was the face of a conscious being.

He pointed to his mouth with one hand, indicating—I discovered that at last—that he could not speak, and motioned with the other as if he wished to write.

I had arisen. "For Heaven's sake, return to bed. Do you want pen and ink?"

An inarticulate sound. He nodded his head. At that moment, his eyes were fixed upon the wall, and his head was turned slowly round. He appeared to see some moving object. A strong shudder—his feet carried him to the bed;—he fell upon it with a groan, and then taking my hand, guided it to his lips, and thence to his heart—pressing it to his heart. I fell upon my knees and prayed, and when I raised my head, all was over. He was gone for ever!

CHAPTER XIII.

IN WHICH LUDLOW'S WILL IS CANVASSED BY HIS EXECUTOR; AND WHEREIN A DYING LADY IMPLORES FOR JUSTICE IN BEHALF OF RICHARD SAVAGE.—WITH THE EFFECT OF SUCH SOLICITATION UPON HIS MOTHER.

LUDLOW'S sudden death had so completely stunned my senses, that, until now, I had been unable to bring my mind to the contemplation of any thing, save the calamity that had befallen me, and of that only vaguely, and with a sort of incredulity. Greaves and his wife had kindly

undertaken, in the first instance, all the necessary arrangements for his funeral, and had asked me many times to communicate with his friends. I had told them he had none. Now, however, I remembered two whom it would be as well to apprise of his death—Myte and Lady Mason. His wife (how I hate to call her so!) was, at this moment, doubtless, on her way to the former—I would write to her ladyship. My then present temper of mind produced the following letter:—

"Madam,

"Your old and faithful servant Ludlow is dead—murdered by his wife—by my mother, and—by you. How he died, should you desire to see me, I will tell you. What he said of you, and the sense he had of your conduct, you shall likewise hear. Meanwhile, I hope this intelligence will cause you as much pain as you ever felt in your life. If it do—I say it not uncharitably, or as wishing wantonly to disturb your peace—it will be some expiation (unavailing, madam, at best!) of your wicked treatment of a worthy man, and of one not so worthy—I mean, your humble servant, and would I could truly add, *not* your grandson,

"RICHARD SAVAGE."

This letter I despatched forthwith by Greaves, with an intimation that it required no answer, and I resumed my seat by the side of my dead friend. The letter I had just written, far from carrying off my evil passions, or such passions as are commonly called evil, had inflamed them to a degree almost intolerable; nor was the sight of that meek, subsiding face, imperceptibly changing, but hourly changed, calculated to calm or to moderate them.

Whilst I thus sat, brooding revenge—for my thoughts had flowed into that channel—Greaves returned, and acquainted me that he had been overtaken by a footman from Lady Mason, and that the man earnestly requested to see me immediately. He was below. I desired that he might be shown up stairs.

The man entered—my letter open in his hand.

"Oh! young gentleman," said he, "my lady must see you directly. She gave me this letter into my hands, saying I should find out where you lodged by it, and hurried me away. I think she's beside herself, in a manner of speaking. She hasn't walked so well about the room these many years."

"And you have read that letter, Nat, I suppose?" said I.

"Why, yes, sir, I have, I must say. I hope it ain't true."

"Go in and see for yourself. He was a friend of yours, I believe."

The man did so, and came back in a minute, his face bedewed with tears.

"He *was* a friend to me, sir," said he; "you may say that; and the best friend I ever had in the world. The kindest man a servant ever lived under. There'll be plenty of grieving at the house, when I tell 'm. I hope he died, as I may say, happy, sir—comfortable, like?"

"I trust he did, Nat."

"He deserved both to live and die happy, sir. The good he has done unbeknown——"

I stopped the friendly fellow. "I can readily believe it," said I; "but time presses now. Tell Lady Mason I will be with her in a few minutes."

I lingered awhile after the man was gone. If I say that I uttered a fervent prayer, I must say also what that prayer was. It was that what I designed to speak to Lady Mason might come home to her—that I might make her at least feel—that I might cause her to tremble—that I might enforce *her* to pray. "Charity! charity!" methinks I hear some worthy, well conducted, paying-his-way citizen exclaim, whose debtor lately died in gaol, hearing that his wife had hanged herself and that his children were gone to the parish, "Revenge does not become us—put away this heathen morality." Worthy mouth-maker and citizen, it is not revenge, I tell you; it is resentment, which is just, and human, and christian. Tell me, expounder of the faith that is in you, whether we are not bidden to *look* for justice and to *hope* for mercy?

Opening the street door, Myte stood before me, pale and motionless as a statue.

"Well, sir, do you want me?" I said coldly.

He seized me by the wrists. "Ricardo, don't rate—don't scold me; I know I deserve it, but you must not. I told your prodigious preceptor—what was his name? I call him Gog—how sorry I was that I had done you injustice. Who's to believe a lying world? I won't, till we're all of us liars, and then lies will be truth. Here! come in—I want to speak with you."

"I am busy, sir—I am engaged," said I, striving to release myself from him—"Lady Mason particularly desires to see me."

He stared at that, and then, snapping his fingers—"And so it was a lie (how current the lies are!) I heard just now. Take me up stairs. I won't keep you a minute. Woful's at home?"

He *was* at home—I did not undeceive him, but brought him into the sitting room.

"Jezebel has been with me," said he; "where's Jeremiah? but, never mind, it's better he's away for the present. Jezebel has been with me."

"And who is she, sir?"

"Who is she? There can be but one living woman to whom that name belongs: no, no, I don't mean the other—you know what I call *her*. Well, she told me, but what could be her motive I don't know, for I would scarce listen to her—she told me that Woful was dead; ay and she looked as though she expected I should believe her—and she *did* give me a turn."

"And how did she look?" I inquired.

"As though she wanted to cry, but couldn't. She talked something about a will—a will! She was never solicitous about his will before, I believe."

"She has for once spoken truth, Mr. Myte," I replied. "Your friend, that is to say, Mr. Ludlow, once your friend—*is* dead."

Myte jumped out of his chair. "Dead! Ludlow dead! impossible! You are jesting with me. You know, and he

knows, how I love him. It was all a mistake, I tell you again and again; and I'll believe him and you the longest day I have to live, though you speak parables."

I opened the door of the inner room, and pointed to the coffin. "Look here, sir, this is truth, I am sorry to say it."

After gazing at the coffin for some minutes, he leaned against the mantel-piece, and fell into tears. "Why didn't you break it to me?" he said, reproachfully. "You don't know what you do, young man, when you trifle with an old man's feelings. *You* don't cry. Why don't you? You're a stock or a stoic, which is pretty much the same thing. Poor, dear old Woful. Old? not old. I'm a fool and a liar. Oh, Ricardo! We are quits now. You have wounded me more than I ever hurt you."

His grief affected me. "I did not mean to do so," said I; "forgive me. Come, sir, look upon him for the last time."

"Look upon him!" and he shrank from me. "I wouldn't for the two hemispheres. I should never recover it—it would kill me. I never saw a corpse in my life, and never will. Lud! lud! what'll Mrs. Myte say, and Vandal, and Mrs. Langley? Does Lucas know of it?"

"I had forgotten Lucas; but I will send to him."

"The jockey of Norfolk!" cried Myte—"how will old Parr take it? Like a pill, to be sure. It'll clap a second winter upon that old white poll of his, and kill him outright. We that have seen such nights together!"

He appeared to brighten at the recollection, but his countenance presently fell again. "What killed him?" he asked.

"Another weak and wicked invention of my mother's, in which Jezebel, as you call her, sir, took part."

"What! more lies?" cried Myte; "don't let me hear them, I beseech and implore. I won't. You are going to Lady Mason—let me walk that way with you. Heigho! Who could believe women were so wicked? It was because I thought better of them, that I thought worse of you."

He ventured to put his head in at the door of the inner room. "God bless you!" said he, "dear old companion, and honest fellow, and good friend, lying there, all cheerless, dark, and deadly, as Lear says; but oh! that's too shocking.

—If you're not gone to heaven"—and he turned his face, streaming with tears, towards me—"why, then, I shall have a warm place of it—I shall, Ricardo, I shall; and a very warm place, too. He was a good man—good—and a man. Heaven bless him! Say 'Amen.'"

I did so, and he embraced me, crying.

"I shall blubber my eyes out, if I stay any longer, and must walk home by guess; or do, as blind beggars do, knock people about the toes with a stick till I get a clear path. Take me away. And don't let me see the man you sent to me once or twice—Greaves. Greaves, indeed! How many friends has he lost this quarter to whom he owed money, and who never took a memorandum?"

By the time we were got into the street, he had rallied considerably. (Trivial little grig! I must e'en say thus much of thee. Thou wert too merry a man to endure grief for five minutes together, till—for the grim enemy, forerunner and, like a link-boy, foreshower of death, will press his company upon us—till, I say, he came to thee with thy wife's last prayer upon his lips, and then thou held'st out some five days. Peace be with thee and thy joyous spirit!)

We walked in silence till we came to the street in which Lady Mason lived.

"Stay a moment," said he, "one moment. The woman said something about a will. Has he left a will?"

"He died too suddenly to make a fresh one. He wished to see you, but died before morning. He told me you held a will of his, made many years since."

"What! that to the Reformation Society? His will-o'-the-wisp, as I used to call it, that would mislead his money into the quagmires of vice, and the sloughs of iniquity. I shall burn it, and hand over his money to you."

"You must do no such thing," I replied. "I hold it sacred. Besides, I have already told his wife that such a will is in existence."

"Who, were I to burn it, would come in for her thirds," said he. "Did ever goose hold his head up so high as you, and was ever goose *such* a goose? Why did you open lip to such a harridan?"

"It can't be helped now," I returned. "Had he lived, it had been otherwise. No matter. I dare say I shall be able to make my way through the world."

"Ay, and come out at the antipodes, no doubt," returned Myte; "nothing more easy. Give a man a thousand years, and the first three-score and ten don't count for much. What's to be done?"

"I have no earthly right or title to the money," said I. "It is true, he had no relations; but his wife knows of the will."

"She will have all if I destroy it," said Myte; "and you can have none whether I do or no. O Lord! I wish I could be a rogue safely—for this once. If I wouldn't, I hope I may never be honest again. Go to Lady Mason, and call upon me on your return."

I promised that I would do so, and was hastening away, when he again detained me. "Look you here," said he, "I have a large sum of money of poor Woful's in my hands. Well—what must I do? and it must be done, I see that. I must wait upon the society. I shall be ushered into a room—to the committee—where three or four red-faced and round-bellied rogues are seated—rogues, to whom the reformation of manners has not extended, but to whom the cant brings grist—and good grist, too; such as makes the sinners thank Heaven they never thought of being honest, but did think of seeming to be so. Well; behold me: here I come on my fool's errand—of money left—of the testator—of the amount. How their eyes goggle one at the other! 'Pray be seated, sir'—'let me beg of you to be seated, sir.' How the elbows are at work at the sides which are about to have another inch covering upon them. Lord! oh Lord! what a born fool will they think me, and what a fool shall I look—not a born fool, but a made one—to show how great a fool could be made. I pay over my money, and retire blushing, like a modest man who has done a good deed—for they always look as ashamed as though they had been doing a bad one. Lo! as I pass through the gates, two thieves, one on each side, gauging my empty pockets. 'Walk in, gentlemen, to the committee, I beg;

to the committee, I entreat. They have already saved you the trouble.' And this is the end of Woful's money."

I could not forbear smiling, albeit anxious to get away, at this whimsical picture.

"Don't laugh," said he, shaking his head. "It won't bear thinking upon. There—go. 'Society for the Reformation of Manners!' Why don't they enclose Hounslow Heath, and Bagshot Heath, and pension the highwaymen?"

He let me go, and I hastened to Lady Mason. The servant announced me, and retired. She met me half way. Spite of my recent resolve, I could not, for the life of me, have uttered a word of reproach to her. She looked like a doomed being—like one whom death had called, and who had heard, and who had seen him.

She laid her hand upon my arm, and said, "Do you know what you have written to me? You tell me Ludlow is dead. Is that true? Oh no—and that I have murdered him; and *that* is not true. What had his wife to do with it? I cannot make that out. You are a strange youth."

I was about to say something, but she checked me. "How you are grown since last I saw you. This is an odd world, my boy, and I am a strange woman, and very old—as old as I well can be to retain my poor senses. Wandering again, I declare! Come, tell me," and she made me lead her to the window. "You say Ludlow is dead. I cannot believe it—I will not believe it. Look me in the face, and confess that it is not true."

"I wish, madam, from my soul——"

"You look me in the face," she said, stopping me, "and your face tells me that it is true. It is a sad thing," with a shudder, "but it cannot be helped now. It is a way we must all go. You must let me know how he died. But why do you keep me standing here? Don't you know that I am aged and infirm?"

I took her arm and helped her to her chair.

"There—there. Now we are as we should be. Now, sit down. What did Ludlow say in his last moments—of me, I mean. I want to know that. He reproached me, did he not? He vilified his mistress. Well—I say it is a

strange world." She fixed her eyes earnestly upon me. "He cursed me—cursed me."

"No, madam, he did not," I replied. "He enjoined me to tell you that, as you had been his earliest, so had you been his best friend and protectress—that he was sensible of your goodness, and grateful for it; and on his dying bed he blessed you, and prayed for your happiness."

She shook her head with a sad smile. "He was a good creature; faithful and honest, and only too grateful. But what of the last few months? What of my discharging him? I *did* discharge him from my house—from my service."

"Pardon me, madam, I would rather not answer that question."

"But that question must be answered," she returned quickly, and with an imperious air, which reminded me whose mother she was. "It must be answered. No, no, sir; I must be obeyed. What did he say?" measuring her words, "of my turning him out of doors?"

"He said, madam," I replied, after some hesitation, "that it was not your act; that you had been misled—controlled by another."

"And that is true—true—true," she exclaimed, snatching my hands between hers. "Oh, my poor dear boy, how grieved you look. Come, come," patting my cheek, "you must not grieve. It is for old people to grieve; I am sure I do. That is true; I *have* been misled and controlled, and made to do things in my age at which my youth would have blushed, and which have shamed both youth and age. I thank my good God that I am not well able to reason with myself now. There is a hoop of iron bound round my head—it seems like it. But for that, I should go distracted. You must not tell me, or write to me any thing more about Ludlow. Murdered! indeed!—murdered!" repeating the word many times.

"Mrs. Freeman is dead—that's true, is it not? He told me so five years ago."

"It is true, madam; Mrs. Freeman died some years since."

She fell into a long reverie. "Why," she said, at length, suddenly, with a smart blow upon my arm, "to be sure. Jane Barton was his wife—pretty Jane Barton, as we used to call her. She brought herself to shame; but—mercy on me, that was long ago—very long ago. That never murdered him. Hush! what's that?"

I listened, but heard nothing.

"Hush! she's coming: let us be prepared for her," arranging her head-dress—"let us be quite serene. Don't stir."

The door opened, and Mrs. Brett walked into the room. There was no symptom of confusion or even of surprise when she saw me. Was there ever such a self-possessed lady? I protest, as she advanced, she accosted me with a slight grave smile, and there was an humble depression of the eye-lids—mock, that, I suspect.

"Is your ladyship better this morning?" she said, taking the seat, which, on her entrance, I had involuntarily relinquished.

"I have heard news that should make me worse," replied Lady Mason. "Ludlow is dead."

"I know it," returned Mrs. Brett; "and I am glad of it. He was a fool and a knave, and deserved to die. Either may be happy and prosperous; both in one, never."

"You must not talk so," exclaimed Lady Mason; "he was a good creature."

"Nay, I said it out of no enmity to the fellow," cried Mrs. Brett. "He is gone. Let him go. He was not fitted for this world."

"And we that are," said Lady Mason, hastily, "are we prepared for the next? Oh, Anne! Anne!"

"I was at church last Sunday, and heard a very long sermon," said Mrs. Brett with a yawn. "But you are ill—your head bad again. Why is this youth standing here? Is he wanted?"

"Your son!" cried Lady Mason, almost sternly. "Recollect yourself, child, he is your own son. Now Ludlow is gone, I must have no more of this. He was the obstacle."

Mrs. Brett turned to me with a lofty air. "Were you with *your father*, when he died, sir?"

Insolent woman! How I despised her! "No, madam," I replied, "I was not. Were you?"

What a demoniacal face was hers in an instant. She would have arisen, but was detained by Lady Mason, who flung her arms about her. "The dear boy!" she cried imploringly, "the dear boy! be merciful to him, as you hope for mercy. See, how grieved he looks! Oh, that I were dead, and in my grave! Anne, you will send me to my grave."

Mrs. Brett gently released herself from her mother's embrace. "You will kill yourself with these extravagances," she said; "be composed; nay, I will leave you else. We must have no scenes."

"I am quite calm," said Lady Mason, vaguely.

"That is well. I am glad the boy is here. Step forward, sir; I have something to say to my mother, which you may hear. You will see that I wish you well, for it will be a lesson to you."

I approached, and took a seat.

"Madam," she resumed, turning to Lady Mason, "the wisdom you may derive from my story will come too late. Ludlow, too, might have profited by it. This boy is my son."

"Heaven be praised!" began Lady Mason.

"At all fitting times, Heaven should be praised," interrupted Mrs. Brett. "Restrain yourself, madam, I entreat. This boy is my son—you say so. I will not deny it."

Lady Mason was again about to break forth into a rapture; but a something in the face of Mrs. Brett, as I conceive, restrained her. "My daughter," she said piteously, "you must not trifle with us, or play with us."

"I will not," returned Mrs. Brett; "that I have never done with you. Perhaps I might say, would that you had never played and trifled with me. That youth, if he were my son, or if he be my son—as you will, might echo, 'would that you had never played and trifled with me.' And I am accounted wicked, cruel, vindictive, unnatural. Look, now, what you and your good Ludlow have done."

She paused, regarding me intently for some time. I was

interested, and, at the time, touched by the expression of her face. Her eyes appeared full of sorrowful meaning—almost of tenderness—feigned, I know now it was feigned. She passed her hand across her brow. "It is gone—and for ever."

"Madam," she resumed, "when Lord Rivers was dying, he sent for me. He wished to see me. The living, who wrong me, I can never pardon; the dying I can forgive. I went to him. He was solicitous to know what had become of my son. I told him he was dead. *You* told *me* so. I thought his brain was touched when he questioned me. What else could I think? And when he said that you had constantly assured him the child was living, even to the last, within a few months, I was confirmed in my belief. My story is at an end, when I acquaint you that the sum of six thousand pounds, which he had left to the child in his will, was struck out of it."

She turned to me.

"You are vastly indebted to your friends, sir, if you are my son: if not, very little to your fortune."

Lady Mason appeared not to comprehend, at the moment, the tenor of this speech; but when she did—— Description of that face were hopeless. Even her daughter was terrified by it.

"Speak, speak!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, yes—speak? we must all speak when we come to answer God. I must, and so must you. Weep, woman, weep; or, what is better—pray."

She fell down upon her knees, raising her aged and clasped hands towards me.

"Now, my God!—and thou art a merciful God—what is left to me but to die? Oh! thou wronged, dear child—on all hands wronged—how can I look for forgiveness from thee!"

Her daughter had taken her in her arms, and was attempting to lift her from the ground.

"Rise, madam!" she exclaimed; "what strange proceedings are here! The youth must laugh at you. You knew Lord Rivers left my son nothing. It is but as it was."

"Would that I were as I was, or that I had never been!" cried Lady Mason. "Rise? I may be raised, Anne; but I shall never rise again."

She snatched Mrs. Brett hastily by the wrist, and beckoning impatiently to me to approach, took mine also.

"My daughter!" she said, solemnly, "the wicked do not bad deeds for nothing. I have done your will, and it has been wickedness. I ask you now to do my will; it is, that you will save two souls, or try to save them. Behold your son—your own son, as Heaven is my witness; as Ludlow, who is now, I trust, in heaven, is his witness, your own son. I will be calm, but you must hear me. We deceived you—but he never did you wrong. You cannot hate him for our fault. Come—come, my dear daughter, my Anne, my only child—take him to your arms, to your heart."

Feebly, indeed, but with all the strength of which she was mistress, did the venerable lady strive to join our hands.

"No?" she cried, staring upward wildly at her daughter,—"By the Maker, we have both outraged, you shall do my bidding. Anne Brett, you *shall* obey me. Oh! speak to her, Richard—join with me in entreaties—in prayers to that insensible woman. You may look, Anne, but I see that you are moved;" (poor lady! Mrs. Brett moved in my favour!) "you will acknowledge him—you will protect him—you will be his mother."

"Assure yourself, madam, that I will not," returned Mrs. Brett.

Lady Mason relinquished her hold upon us, and fell upon the floor—motionless then, as death.

"You have killed her, madam!" I exclaimed.

"Peace, dolt," she replied; "ring the bell, and retire. You can be of no service here."

"I will at least stay, madam, till it be ascertained whether Lady Mason still lives."

She answered not, but taking her mother's head upon her knee, applied salts to her nose. The servants now ran in, and raising their lady in their arms, conveyed her to an inner room, Mrs. Brett following them.

Could I believe my ears? I listened, and was at length

assured that they had not deceived me. Yes; Mrs. Brett, with the most fond and tender endearments, was endeavouring to restore her mother to consciousness—blandishments, such as I have seen a young mother exhaust, or rather strive to exhaust, upon her first-born, and which a daughter may gracefully and sweetly repay to her aged parent. I heard these. A pang of nature—for it was a pang—shot through my heart—a thrill went through my frame—my eyes filled with tears. Then, not till then, I felt that I had a mother. Like a fool—like a great girl, or a blubbering boy, I sat down and wept—sighed—sobbed, that my mother might have heard me.

I was disturbed at this sorry employment by the entrance into the room of the lady who had unwittingly put me upon it. I dried my eyes hastily, and wiped my beslubbered face. Her own was paler than before, but as cold and callous.

"You are still here, sir?" she said, advancing.

"I waited, madam, to learn the state of Lady Mason."

"She is better. But you have, I perceive, been weeping. If for Lady Mason, you have begun too soon. You should reserve your tears for her funeral. Tears are sometimes scarce at funerals."

"At yours, at least, they will be," I thought to myself afterwards.

If any moisture had lingered upon my cheeks, the blush that overspread my face would have scorched it off in an instant. As yet, however, something of the woman abided with me. I approached her respectfully.

"Why, madam," I said, "will you ever treat me thus? How have I wronged—in what way have I injured—in what manner have I offended you? What is my fault? Tell me, and I will correct it. Would that I knew how I could oblige you!"

"You know very well how you could oblige me," she returned; "ay, and Richard Freeman, or Ludlow—whatever be your name, even to you would I acknowledge my obligation. Let me not see you again. Let me never hear of you or from you more, and I will thank you.

Relinquish your absurd—your preposterous claims; return to the honest calling for which your parents designed you, and which, I am told, was that of a cobbler——"

This was too much.

"What, madam!" I cried fiercely, "after the asseveration of your dying mother, will you still reject me?"

"That was so well thought on of Ludlow," she said, with a scornful smile—"the artful knave to a weak and confiding mistress. To pass you off—his own, or his sister's, or his wife's son, for mine. The creature hated me, I believe. You *are* a clever youth. You have supported him well. But enough of this. Begone! what is your name; is it Freeman?"

"Richard Savage, madam, son of the late Earl Rivers."

"Words—words—forward, well-taught, well-faced stripling; but a bungler, too. Come, I will be plain with you. Had I been as easy, as credulous as my mother, do you think your abrupt, ill-conceived, ill-executed intrusion upon me in my own house would have imposed upon me? Had I previously been shown the best reason to believe that I had a son in existence, could I have mistaken *you* for him, with those player's antics?"

I was silent, but at length I answered,—

"Nevertheless, madam, and in spite of my inability to express what it is impossible I should feel, namely, that lively affection for your person which your watchful and tender care of me from my infancy upwards might, I do not say it would, have excited in me; and in spite of Ludlow, and in spite of yourself, you know I am your son. And in spite of your barbarous cruelty to me, I know you are my mother."

"And what," she replied, with prodigious assurance, "what if I were to say, I know it likewise. What if I do say so?"

"Perhaps you will not be believed. The world, madam, I have heard, more readily ascribe vices than virtues to mankind; and there are some who appear resolved that in them, at least, the world shall not be mistaken. Keep to your story, madam, by all means; I will stand by mine."

This cutting retort—for so I designed it should be, fell pointless. Perhaps the arrow was shot too high, and missed her. What did she care for the world, half of which was as bad as herself, and the other half no better? She greeted me with a derisive titter.

"Thou foolish novice," she said, leisurely, between her white set teeth, "and what would'st thou be? and what would'st thou do? and what canst thou do?"

"I can tell you what you have done," I replied; "what you will do, who can tell? Ludlow—he is dead."

"Well, sir, proceed."

"Your mother lies dying. These are your doings."

She turned pale at that. "Insolent villain! You dare not say this to me."

"I dare—I will—I have said it. These are your doings, Mrs. Brett. I will now be plain with you. Not satisfied with disowning your son, you would have spirited him from England. Where was I to be sent? To the West Indies? or was I to be murdered on the passage? But worse than this, (I thought, madam, you were a proud lady) you stooped to accept my mercy; and afterwards suborned an infamous wretch to prop your falsehood with another. You have her hand to it, I hear."

"I have," she replied; "and she has signed to what is false; I know it, and I confess it. What of that?"

She laughed, but it was not carried off well. Oh, God! how exquisitely mean she looked at that moment; and she felt she looked so. She was disconcerted; shockingly, painfully self-abased. Ludlow! thou had'st had thy revenge, then, could'st thou but have seen her. Too ample it had been for thy gentle spirit to have borne. I could have wept for the poor soul in that beautiful body, so cursedly employed.

It was some minutes before she recovered her composure. When she did, she said,—

"I repeat, I know that what the woman has signed is false. I tell you, that you may know me. Beware of me, Richard Freeman."

"I must be Richard Savage, madam. My mother's shame is yours, my father's name is mine."

"As you will," she replied, her bosom heaving. "Richard Savage, then—that woman is your mother. You understand me?"

"I do. As you will, as you have said. Upon my word, madam, I believe, after all, you have some consideration for me. Though you yourself disown me, you kindly procure one who is willing to acknowledge me. I ought to be, and am, obliged to you. So little to choose between the two——"

She flashed forth at this, coming towards me with an eye of fire. "Richard Savage"—her hand held forth—she checked herself. "But no, we will have no theatrical show. I hate you. When I say that, it is enough."

I threw forth my hand, and caught her descending fingers. "Mrs. Brett, I do not hate—I despise you."

She strove to look me down, but her eyes fell under mine. She measured me from head to heel, and I her.

Am I not your son, madam?

And we parted, never to meet again, eye to eye, face to face, breath to breath. And was there to be no theatrical show? Not Booth and Mrs. Barry ever stalked from the stage at opposite sides with a more taking dignity. I am told she has a keen sense of the ridiculous. She must have laughed over the remembrance of this often, as I have done. It is well that we should have supplied each to the other, one occasion of mirth. And all, perhaps, that has passed between us, rightly taken, *is* ridiculous. Then, if it be so, let others laugh.

CHAPTER XIV.

RICHARD SAVAGE LAUNCHES INTO LIFE, AND BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH TWO LITERARY CHARACTERS.—HE IS INTRODUCED TO A CERTAIN PLAYER, AND MAKES HIS FIRST DRAMATIC EXPERIMENT.

GREAVES and his wife officiated as mourners with me at the funeral of Ludlow, who was buried in St. James's churchyard. After the ceremony, as we were passing out of the

gate, I was laid hold upon by Lucas, who informed me that Lady Mason had died on that morning. I was not greatly moved by this intelligence. During the three days that had elapsed since I had seen her, I had reflected seriously upon the lamentable consequences to myself that had resulted from her notable project of estranging me from my mother. I could not help feeling that if Mrs. Brett hated me in my infancy, on my father's account, she must have loathed me most intensely when I—the evidence of her shame long since removed—suddenly arose to renew and to aggravate it. I could have forgiven Lady Mason the loss of my fortune, which she had caused; I could pardon the weak facility which had made her the ready, not to say the willing, tool of the other; but I could not forgive her that she had furnished her daughter with a pretext for her hatred of me.

After defraying the expenses of Ludlow's funeral, I found myself in the possession of something less than twenty guineas. I had never before been master of so large a sum, and I made no doubt that long before it was exhausted, I should be supplied with more; in what manner, or from whence, was a consideration to be entered upon at some future time. And let none but such as have grown too old to remember their youth, or too wise to make allowance for its vanities, suggest that I must have known that any given sum must of necessity come to an end, and that unless I had some available resource I could not reasonably count upon a fresh supply. I know all that; but I know, also, that next to the possession of money is the hope of obtaining it; and that with youth hope goes much farther than money, and jogs on cheerfully too. Flushed with my little fortune, I rejected Myte's faintly urged offer of returning to him, and declined a pressing repetition of the proposals made to me by Burridge, that I would place myself under his care, to be sent to college, and to come forth a scholar and a gentleman. My contumacy offended both, who, widely different in all other respects, were alike—as indeed, all men are pretty much alike—in this, that they approved their own way so much, that they could not endure that

anybody else should presume to have a way of his own. My inexperience was the plea upon which each founded his right to dictate to me; but when I would not be dictated to, each resented it as though my experience should have taught me more wisdom.

Upon one thing I was resolved; that I would never again apply or appeal to my mother or to Colonel Brett. Who I was, however, and how I had been treated, I determined to make extensively known. I was perfectly assured that my story would meet with an easy reception from the world. It was so improbable (thanks to Lady Mason) on some points, that no one would believe I could have invented it; and nature had given me my mother's face as to the fact, and my mother's spirit in support of it. As my money melted under my fingers, I bethought me of the three hundred pounds which had been bequeathed to me by my godmother, Mrs. Lloyd. With some difficulty I discovered who this lady had been, where she had resided, and the name of her executor. To this worthy person I betook myself, and mentioned who I was, and the reasons that had so long prevented me from putting forward my claim. I hinted significantly that I was now come for the money, which I wished forthwith should be placed at my disposal. The incredulous trustee laughed in my face, which was my best as, indeed, it was the only voucher for my pretensions; and reminding me that it was necessary I should furnish some more satisfactory evidence than features could establish, opened the door and bade me a very good day. Many times, at subsequent periods of my life, did I renew my application to this gentleman, when my story had been made universally known, and was currently believed; but I never succeeded in overcoming or removing his obstinate disbelief.

In the mean while, I had made the acquaintance of a young fellow who had previously occupied my lodgings, and who occasionally dropped in upon Mr. and Mrs. Greaves, at dinner time, with a collection of casualties and calamities which he transferred from his own brain, where they had been created, to the sepulchral bosoms of his excited listeners. In a short time, Merchant, for that was his

name, found his way up stairs into my room, and made overture of intimacy with me, which I gladly encouraged. His advantage over me in point of years, his fund of animal spirits, which were inexhaustible, and his utter and openly expressed contempt of the forms and formalities of wealth and station, made him, perhaps, a dangerous companion to a youth thrown loose upon the world, but they rendered him a very pleasing one. I soon fell in with his humour, and adopted his mode of thinking. I began to look down with great contempt upon those solemn "puts"—for so he called them—who make the acquisition of money the sole employment of their lives; and he soon introduced me to a knot of choice spirits—his boon companions—who held, or professed to hold, in equal abhorrence all grovellers of whatever description. I believe the truth to be, that many of these gentlemen accommodated their sentiments to their condition; for although, perhaps, a worse apology can hardly be assigned for a bad coat than the assertion that you despise a better, or for an empty pocket than that you hate money, yet that apology is in common request amongst those gentlemen who chance to be ragged and penniless.

"Dick," said he, one day, for we were on terms of the utmost familiarity, "I wonder a young fellow of your spirit can endure to live with these dreary cannibals, who feed upon dead bodies. When I first came to live here, I thought verily, they would have made a raving Bedlamite of me, with their horrors; but I discovered an invaluable secret. How, thought I, can they have acquired such a treasure of terrible narrative? how, but by the contributions of former lodgers, fellows who, in self-preservation, coined dismal wonders, and so converted themselves from listeners into relators. Joyously did I snatch the conviction, and act upon it; and I think a more goodly catalogue of complicated atrocities than they could furnish to you of my sole brain's begetting it might be difficult to hit upon."

I had long thought, I told him, of changing my lodging—the one I held being more expensive than my present restricted means justified me in retaining.

"Then why not come and live with me?" he rejoined.

"I have but one room, it is true; but then it is exceedingly light and airy, being at the very top of the house—time out of mind the residence of lofty souls. You shall see it. What is the present state of your finances?"

"About seven guineas," I replied, "when I have discharged my lodgings."

"A little fortune," he returned, "and will be enough for both of us, till I get some money, for which I am now at work. What do you say? Shall we make a stock purse between us?"

I told him that my purse was very much at his service, provided I might depend upon sharing his when he had accomplished the accession to it of which he had spoken.

"A bargain then," said he; "and since you must, I suppose, stay here another week, lend me a guinea to go on with, for the devil a farthing has had a master in me for some days."

I handed him the piece, which he viewed with considerable satisfaction, presently committing it to his pocket.

"Now," said he, as he arose to go, "let the dismal man and woman instantly know your intentions. If they inquire curiously your reasons for leaving them, tell them, without ceremony, you are at the last pecuniary gasp. If, upon that, they don't let you go, and wish you gone, and prophesy your death and burial within a month after your departure, they are as merry souls as Christians can be, and I'm as sad a body as a sinner ought to be. I'm off to the eating-house; for 'cupboard,' 'cupboard,' cries within me plaintively; and then to L'Estrange, that great philosopher, who is so profound that he can understand his own writings. My employment is, to give 'em such a turn that nobody else shall understand 'em. We are great, both of us, in the hopelessly obscure."

"L'Estrange!" said I; "what Mr. L'Estrange of Bloomsbury Square?"

"You know him, then, do you?" cried he, holding up his hands, and bursting into a violent fit of laughter. "Did mortal eye ever light upon such an original? '*Si monumentum queris*,'—if you seek for the Monument, and

can't find it on Fish Street Hill, look in Bloomsbury Square, and behold !—L'Estrange. Yes, I am, at his own request, infusing Cimmerian darkness into his new theory of moral obligations; 'for,' says he, 'I want only the learned to apprehend me. The vulgar might construe it too literally.' I say, Dick, when pay-day comes, away with theory. He must follow the old practice."

When the day of my departure arrived, Mr. Greaves and his wife embraced me with mournful cordiality.

"Beware," said Mrs. Greaves, "of the many dangers that besets all on us in the midst o' this great town."

"That we live from day to day," observed Greaves, "is owing to a merciful providence. Mr. Merchant can tell you of the sad things that do happen to persons of all ages from day to day, from hour to hour, from minute to minute."

Up went the eyes of Mrs. Greaves heavily and slowly. "Too true—too true," with a sigh. "We shall, perhaps, see you again. I hope so. But the death of Mr. Ludlow tells us as how——"

"Nothing is to be reckoned upon in this world," interrupted Greaves. "Since the sudden swallowing up of that family, as they were sitting at their dinner, eating a breast of——"

"Veal," cried Mrs. Greaves, breathlessly. "Why, Merchant knowed all on 'em, except one—a friend as dropped in, as *he* may do, just at——"

"Pudding time," groaned Greaves. "But only see, my dear, if Mr. Savage ain't laughing."

"The young and thoughtless will have their fun out," she replied; "but it won't last. He'll cry and roar one of these days, as we have had to do."

I tore myself away from the bosom-beating couple, and followed by a porter who carried my trunk, was met by Merchant at the corner of the street.

After walking a considerable distance, we arrived at Drury Lane.

"Here, then," said Merchant, halting, and waving his hand, "in this time-honoured quarter of the Babylonish city you are about to dwell. There—over the way—in

that court, at the very extremity of it, snug in the corner. Come along."

I walked after him with some misgivings.

"Here we are," said he, taking out a key, and opening the door. "The man, I suspect, will not be able to carry your box to our room with it upon his head. This house was built for comfort—no wide, lofty passages and staircases to pass through, which give a man the tooth-ache. A sensible economy of bricks and mortar."

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, as I plodded up several narrow flights of worn-out stairs, "what a place is this!"

"Isn't it?" said he, complacently, purposely mistaking my exclamation for an outbreak of rapture—"isn't it? Who would think of looking after a man here? Who, I say, could expect to find him here?—a very important recommendation of it, Savage, as one of these days you'll acknowledge. Now, pay the man his hire, and let him go. We'll get the box into the room."

I did so.

"As well," said he, winking his eye, when the man was out of ear-shot—"as well we didn't give him a peep of the place. Now, then, what do you think of our lodging?" ushering me into it.

"Why, I can't say that it commends itself to one's liking on the instant."

"It does *not*," he returned. "I grant you that. I had my prejudices against it, I can tell you, when I first came to it; but they wore off. Plenty of light, you'll observe, especially just under the window. These three little panes *must* be mended. I must remind Mrs. Skegg of them once more. Why, on a fine day, you can see the bedstead at the other end of the room."

"Indeed!" said I, approaching that ancient piece of furniture. "Methinks the sun should have worthier objects to shine upon. But with what, in the name of Morpheus, whose name, I fear, I am taking in vain, is this bed stuffed?"

"'Down, busy devil, down,' as the fellow says in the play," he answered, laughing heartily. "But that's a

wretched clinch, too. No, Mr. Richard," he added, gravely, "from certain evidence that protrudes from one end of the tick, I pronounce it stuffed with wool, list, dust, wisps of hay. What matter? These chairs, also; there are two—have been sat upon—there's no denying it. When they do let you down, it is easily, like camels, those patient beasts. This way, my friend; a little practice will enable you to poke the fire without scattering the burning cinders about the room. Fenders are of no real service. And when the smoke won't go up the chimney, it goes out at the window. Your eyes soon become accustomed to it. Oh! it's a sweet place!—that is," he said, after a pause, bursting into a fit of laughter, "when you're once used to it." Then, stalking to the other end of the room, and throwing up his arms, he exclaimed with much energy,

> 'The mind is its own place, and of itself
> Can make a Heaven of hell, a hell of Heaven.'

If that's true, my friend, and I believe it is, you may make yourself comfortable, even here."

I was fain to reconcile myself to this wretched accommodation, which, after all, was not quite so vile as Merchant had portrayed it. I remembered the garret of Mrs. Freeman, in Chancery Lane, and the miserable truckle by the side of Joseph Carnaby.

"And now that we have got you here," said he, "what do you propose to do? You will not endeavour to make terms with your mother?"

"I will not," said I, resolutely.

"She would thank you for that. We will, then, let her be for the present. You wish to make your way in the world?"

"I do, but how?"

"How! ay, I thought 'how' was coming," cried Merchant. "A peremptory little dog, Master How; and yet he seldom gets a satisfactory answer. You have no particular liking or genius for trade or business?"

"I hate both most cordially."

"Hate both!—I thought so. Will you permit me to ask you, Savage, in what direction your genius lies?"

The question posed me. "Why—hem!" I began—"as to that——"

"You don't know? Just my case. I've been so long as to that, as to this, and as to t'other, that as to the thing—the *rem*—the money—I am further off than ever. Have you an addiction to letters?"

I brightened at the question. "Merchant," said I, "of all the pursuits—the professions in the world, that of an author is the one for which I feel that I am destined. I am young to be sure; but I have already amused myself with the composition of several slight performances. Permit me,"—I arose, and made towards my trunk. "The interest you are pleased to take in me," I resumed, plunging the key into the lock, "delights me. You shall see."

"What! going to get me to read them?" cried Merchant. "Prose or verse?"

"Chiefly the latter," I replied, producing a packet.

He held up his hands and turned up his eyes, and groaned deeply. "I couldn't read them for the world. I couldn't, I protest. Besides, I've read 'em before."

"Merchant!"

"All before," he repeated. "'Corydon'—'Phillis'—'rustic crook'—'purling stream'—'verdant glade'—'fanning zephyr.' Then, 'Philomel'—'cooing turtle'—'enamoured swain'—'bashful fair'—'frisking;' sometimes it is, 'skipping lamb'—'feathered songster'—'tuneful choir.' For all under the 'fleecy clouds,' or the 'azure vault,' I couldn't have 'em over again."

I forced a laugh, but was not a little mortified to find that he had anticipated several of my poetical graces.

"Come, come," said he, observing my confusion; "let me look over them. You are a son of Adam. It is not your original sin. The worst of it is, the fruit was not so tempting at first hand."

I handed the packet to him with some hesitation. He ran them over hastily, and then tying them together, tossed them to me.

"Better than I expected, a great deal better," said he; "but you must commit no more at present. You have read

Mr. Pope—I see you have. When you are as old as he—he is still very young—you may do like him. Do like him? yes, write good verses which the public will read, if you can prevail upon a certain number of lords and gentlemen to assure the public they are good."

"But, surely, Mr. Pope, without such patronage——"

"Would be Mr. Pope without such a public," interrupted Merchant. "No, no; Pope is wise in his generation: a wiser man, as to the world, than Pope does not live in it. No man flatters lords more, or tells lords more truth than Pope. He flatters individual lords, and speaks the truth of lords in the mass. The consequence is, the individual lords believe he does not flatter them, because he sets them above their fellows; and the public think him an honest and independent man, because he decries rank. That man will be worth money. A glorious genius—for politics!"

"I have heard, indeed," said I, "that it is necessary to pay court to a person of honour, as he is called, and to crave his permission to dedicate your work to him; but it is a lowness to which I could not descend. If I am to make an impression upon the public, it shall be by my own merit alone. For my part, I can scarcely conceive an object more despicable than a mere man of rank."

"You must forgive me," returned Merchant, "if I presume to hold the stirrup while you alight from that hobby of yours, which you cannot ride gracefully, and which, should it begin to prance, will throw you. A mere man of rank! what is he? I suppose he is as good as a mere man without rank. His rank is no disqualification, I hope. Now, I'll tell you who is more despicable. A mere man of letters. Don't frown, for I want you to open your eyes. You never saw—but I have seen—an author in the first flush of public favour. Ha! ha! ha!" and he laughed with a deep-toned and boisterous energy, "what a disgusting animal! What an insolent, what an exacting, what an unconscionable coxcomb! He is not for this world—not he. He is all for posterity, if it will have him. Of course—of course—posterity will be too glad of him. There will be nobody else to have. Author no more—he

is the choice spirit of the age. And there are none whom he ridicules, and would wrong, and affects to despise, so much as his poorer brethren. And all this, because he has done what thousands might have done better—thousands have done as well—thousands have refrained from doing, and thousands despise, when it is done."

"Well," said I, "this is all very good, and perhaps it may be all very true, but it is nothing to our—I should rather say my—present purpose. What am I to do now?"

"First of all, and chief of all," said he, "look upon authorship as a mere business. Then, do your best. The public will tell you your exact worth, and it will be your own fault if you do not get it."

"Then the *vox populi*—ha! Merchant! then the despicable fellow would be right, after all. *Is* the *vox populi* the——"

"*Vox Dei?*" cried he. "No. I was a fool. But I wish you rather to follow than to go before my maxims. When a man thinks too highly of himself, it commonly happens that he thinks too meanly of the world. I would have you do neither. Genius is not always successful—conceit is not always triumphant; genius is proud in adversity, in prosperity modest. Conceit is mean and base in both."

"Are you not growing too serious?" said I. "These cautions, for which I thank you, are out of time, because, as yet, I have done nothing. I hope, whatever my station in literature may be, I may never find occasion to apply them." (I could not help feeling vain, young sinner that I was!—that all this talk on the part of Merchant implied an indirect compliment to me.)

"I believe I went out of my depth," he replied, gaily; "but I wanted to reconcile you to the room, and the room to you. I revolve high and serious meditations in this garret, I can tell you. Yes, Savage, you must put away your verses. You must not attempt to write poetry before you can think. No man can write fine poetry unless he possess more sense—common sense, than others. Take that for granted. You must waddle before you walk; run in a go-cart before you fly in the clouds. Write a play."

"A tragedy!" I exclaimed; "if I believed—if you thought I should succeed—Oh no!"

"Oh no! indeed; I neither think, nor do you, I hope, believe that you could do any such thing. Your dagger would be pointless, and your bowl cracked. The buskin is too large for your foot at present. You must try on a very little sock—a farce."

"A farce!—my genius does not lie in that direction, Mr. Merchant."

"And why not?" said he. "How do you know in what, or where, it lies? I wonder what genius is, that it can only lie in one place. Not much like its owners, I imagine, who are too often compelled to lie where they can. Come, we must try a little comedy."

"Are you serious?"

"I am what I hope the comedy is not to be," he returned. "We have all been present at plays, 'when deep sleep falleth on men.' We must have none of that. Why, I have known a tragedy damned because the uproarious slaughter in the last scene awakened the audience. No—no—a little thing founded on a Spanish plot. Give us a spice of intrigue, with a valet who knows more and talks better than his master, and who has a purpose of his own to serve. My friend Lovell will place it in the hands of one of the players—he knows them all."

"But I fear I should make a poor hand of it," said I.

"Try," said he. "Do you remember what Dryden says somewhere?

> 'The standard of thy style let Etherege be,
> For wit, the immortal spring of Wycherley.'

Now, you have only to give us a little of Wycherley's wit, in something of the style of Etherege, and give your piece a good name (without which dogs are not safe) and your business is done."

"How strange it is," I replied, laying my hand confidentially upon his arm; "I have lately been reading a story, that can be easily transferred to Spain, which I thought of turning into a play, only that I was of opinion such work was beneath me."

"Beneath you?" cried Merchant in amazement. "I have known many a gay young fellow who has found such work very much above him."

"As to the name, Merchant, nothing can be better. The very title of the story, 'Woman's a Riddle.'"

"She is, indeed, and so she will remain, till this world, which alone is the greater riddle, be explained. A most tempting name for the weaker vessels, certainly. About it, while the purse has an inclination one way more than the other. L'Estrange's moral obligations will come upon him, and recruit us just in the nick of time. 'Woman's a Riddle!' Excellent! Poor L'Estrange's wife is most particularly a riddle. She's a puzzle to herself. Time has stood still with her these forty years. She's like a clock never wound up. She tells half-past five on the face, while it is three-quarters past ten by the other dials."

Thus encouraged, I proceeded diligently with my little work, which I completed in less than a month. From a remembrance of what it was, or rather from a conviction of what it must have been, I shall not be wrong, I think, if I assign a very small degree of merit to it. Such as it was, however, it drew many encomiums from Merchant.

"Come, this will do," said he, "this will do. It is, to be sure, not equal to Congreve or Vanbrugh; but Rome wasn't built in a day: that, Vanbrugh could have told you —witty dog! who contrived to make people laugh at his architecture as heartily as at his comedies. Faith! Dick, we must get Greaves and his wife to attend the first performance. I took them once to see the 'Old Bachelor.' Oh! their labial immobility! Oh! the forlornness of their faces! They thought Fondlewife pure tragedy. But now for Lovell—the iron's hot, let us strike at once. This is just the time to see him; though, by the way, he's always to be found at the same house. He's so in with mine host, that the latter daren't refuse to let him go on. The cold victuals, humble porter, and a pipe, are always at his command. Once it was, 'where do you prefer it, Mr. Lovell?' and 'is the punch to your liking, sir? my wife knows your palate.' Ha! ha! she does, indeed."

He amused me with other particulars of this person as we walked down Drury Lane. Lovell had entered life, it seemed, with good prospects; but having run through a small patrimony, had turned author, and was now a hackney writer for booksellers; that is to say, when any one of them would employ him. He had acquired, if the truth must be told, a very indifferent character amongst them, leisure being more congenial to him than labour, and his attachment to drinking partaking of a constancy which he could never be brought to extend to his love of literature. "I am sure," he used to say, "the Czar of Muscovy ought to be very much obliged to me. Here have I taken money for his life these six months, and yet have I spared him. Does any gentleman know anything of the Czar of Muscovy, good or harm? I do not, I protest. Here's his health, and a long life to him, and may I live till I write it."

Merchant halted at the door of a dingy Geneva shop, which was dignified with the name of a tavern. "Follow me up stairs," he said, "the club is held there."

On entering the room, we discerned dimly through a haze of tobacco smoke, about a score of the strangest-looking beings that were ever, perhaps, congregated together, seated round a table. Such a variety of features and expression, with so little pretension to regularity of contour or sobriety of aspect, was never seen except among authors. Merchant directed my attention to Lovell, who was seated majestically in an elevated chair. He was a stout, it is more proper to say, a swollen man, about forty years of age, with a face, except the nose, which was purple, not so much of a red as of a brick-dust colour. There was a comical solemnity about his eyes, heightened by the position of his wig, which he had clawed to one side of his head.

It was with some difficulty that we made our way to this potentate, who was holding forth with no ordinary vehemence of voice and gesture. Too intent upon his argument to break off in the midst, or indeed, to suffer interruption, he greeted Merchant with a sidelong extension of his hand, holding the fingers of his friend till he had

J. Leech.

Savage introduced to Lovell at the Club.

London: Richard Bentley & Son 1896.

concluded, when he threw himself back in his chair in triumph.

"Not a word more—that decides it," he exclaimed, "I won't hear another word——" to a little sharp-faced man, who had determined to secure the best chance of the next speech by keeping his mouth ready open for utterance. "Well, Merchant, we see you at last. *I* thought you were dead, but they talked of catchpolls."

"Permit me to introduce a young gentleman—Mr. Richard Savage—who is particularly anxious for the honour of an introduction to Mr. Lovell."

"Very happy indeed to see Mr. Richard Savage," returned Lovell, rising, and with his hand extended on his breast, bowing profoundly.—"You rogue," to Merchant—"Mr. Savage, I hope, is anxious for more honour than he can derive from an introduction to Jack Lovell."

"If we might request the favour of your joining us in a bowl of punch," suggested Merchant, with a persuasive softness, "over here at the side table?"

Lovell licked his lips with evident satisfaction.

"A bowl of punch! Why, ah!—yes. We'll leave the commonalty, and adjourn."

When the punch had gone round, Merchant, in few words, opened our business to him.

"What!" cried Lovell, "one of us, is he? Mr. Savage, give me your hand. I wish you well—I wish you happy—I wish you prosperous, and therefore, perhaps I ought to say, I wish you would run away from authorship as fast as your good sense will carry you. And so you have written a play—a little comedy—mirth-inspiring comedy! Bless the ingenious young rogue," turning to Merchant, "what a set of teeth he shows! I hope he'll always find employment for 'em."

He regarded me attentively for some moments.

"He'll do—he'll do," he exclaimed, "I see it in every lineament. And you think Jack Lovell can be of service to you? Jack Lovell imbibes new life from the flattering compliment. What he can do, that will he do. Can he say more? Even as I empty this glass," drinking it off,

"so empty my heart of all its friendship, and make use of it."

"Why," said Merchant, "your acquaintance with the players——"

"I know 'em all," returned Lovell, "all! not a man Jack, but Jack knows the man."

"Do you think," observed Merchant, "that Wilks or Cibber could be prevailed upon to look at it?"

"Um!" said Lovell, shaking his head. "Ah! Wilks and Cibber are great men now, and I'm a little man now. Time was, I was a great man then, and they were little men then. 'Fortune turn thy wheel,' as old Kent says; but she has turned it, and it went over me long ago. I knew them all—Betterton, majestic Betterton—and Powel who loved a bowl of punch better—no, as well as I do. I'll tell you what," he added, after a pause, "there's Bullock. I dare say you have a part will suit him. I'll write to him."

"A capital comic actor, Bullock," said Merchant; "Lopez will fit him to a miracle."

"Then to Bullock—innocent beast! I knew him when he was a steer—to him will I write," cried Lovell. "Fetch pen, ink, and paper."

Merchant hastened down stairs to procure them.

"A very good fellow, Merchant," said Lovell, when he was gone; "but he'll never make any thing. He wants perseverance—application, without which nothing ever *was* done, and therefore, I suppose, nothing *can* be done. Ah!

'—— Video meliora, proboque;
Deteriora sequor;'

that is to say, I can see his mote in spite of my own beam. There is no help for it but this," applying to the bowl.

"Mr. Savage," he resumed, setting down his glass, and squeezing my hand, "you will make a more graceful figure with the town than I have done. I know it. We must be friends. In your success I shall behold my own. Yes, yes, I'll say to you in the words of Dryden,—

'Unprofitably kept at Heaven's expense,
I live a rent-charge on His providence;

But you, whom every grace and muse adorn,
Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
Be kind to my remains, and oh, defend,
Against your judgment, your departed friend.
Let not the insulting foe my ——.'

Pshaw!" and he brushed away some maudlin tears that had gathered in his eyes. "I was going too far. I was about to say 'fame,' but that won't do; for I never had, and never shall have, any. But never mind. I hope you'll be as far above Congreve, to whom the lines were addressed, as I am beneath Dryden, who wrote them.

'Guard those laurels which descend to you.'

To you—to him who wrote The Mourning Bride, all blood and bluster—strenuous fustian—Ohs! and Ahs! Here comes Merchant. Can we manage another bowl?"

I declared my willingness to pay for a second, albeit our stock-purse was at a very low ebb. Merchant, however, was drawing to the conclusion of his labours for L'Estrange, when we should have a fresh supply.

"I'll write the letter while the punch is mixing," said Lovell: and he sat down and scrawled an epistle which, stained with punch, and begrimed with pipe-ashes, was placed into my hands.

On the following morning, big with hope and expectation, I hastened to the lodgings of Mr. Bullock, whom I found at home. It was said of Bullock that, on the stage he "had a particular talent for looking like a fool." His eulogists were probably unaware that this was a talent which nature had enjoined him to exercise every where. He received me with an obsequious smirk, revolving his hands one over the other, with—

"May I crave your business with me, young gentleman? What can I do for you?"

I presented my letter, which he deciphered with some difficulty.

"Poor Mr. Lovell," he said in a tone of compassion, "I have not seen him this long while. I believe he is not so well off as his best friends could desire. Some would say it serves him right; but I am far from saying so. I know

what youth is. I was gay myself once. He tells me you have written a play, and that you wish me to read it. I am sure I shall do so with a great deal of pleasure. Have you brought it with you?"

I produced it.

"Ah!" said he, with the same eternal smirk; "a little thing, I perceive. Very well. I will look over it, and if you will do me the pleasure of calling upon me again this day week, I will tell you more."

I was punctual to my appointment.

"Mr. Savage," said he, taking me by both hands, "pray sit down. You are a very ingenious young gentleman. I have read your trifle, and it is pleasant, very pleasant indeed. And yet," he added, with something intended for a sigh, "I fear we shall make nothing of it; I do, indeed. What we shall do with it I am sure I don't know."

I was confounded at this. Poor wretch! I had counted upon its acceptance by the theatre. Merchant had told me I might make myself easy on that score, and I had done so, even before he told me.

"I am extremely sorry, sir," said I, "that I have given you the trouble of reading my performance, and you will readily believe that I am much mortified to learn that it is not adapted for representation."

"Gently, gently, Mr. Savage," he replied; "I did not say that. Youth is so hasty—so very hasty. I said I feared; but we intend to try. I have made some considerable alterations in the plot and dialogue."

"Indeed!" I returned, by no means pleased that he should presume to do any thing of the kind without my concurrence. "Will you give me leave to ask what these alterations are, that I may judge whether——"

"Judge whether!" he repeated with happy mimicry; "how can an author possibly, I say possibly, be a judge of the merit, as an acting play, of his performance? Indeed, after many years, and much practice, he may perhaps acquire some slight insight into the taste of the town; but it rarely happens that he does so. No, Mr. Savage, actors are the only judges of a piece before its representation."

"And yet," said I, "pieces are produced every week, and are damned; and many plays have been rejected, which have afterwards met with extraordinary success."

"That is because the taste changes," he replied; "it is always changing. But for Mr. Cibber, some of Shakspeare's plays had been lost to us. You will be grateful afterwards that I have taken such pains with your little comedy. I have really bestowed my best labour upon it. I think we may now venture to hope, that when it comes to be played, it may prove successful."

"Comes to be played, sir," I replied in overjoyed amazement. "I thought you said you didn't know——"

"*When* it is to be played—nor do I, to the very day. Within a fortnight, I dare say. I thought I should surprise you."

I was little disposed, at this moment, to cavil at his alterations. All tremulous with gratitude, I seized his hand, and poured forth my acknowledgments, which he vouchsafed to receive with smirks innumerable.

The eventful evening arrived on which the fate of this, my maiden effort, was to be decided. Merchant, two days before, had succeeded in coming to an angry settlement with L'Estrange—that philosopher insisting that his secretary and associate was bound, by every tie promulgated in the New Theory, to be contented with half the sum agreed to be paid in the first instance. He insisted that such was the folly, weakness, and moral deficiency of human nature, that an abatement of fifty per cent., in all mundane bargains, was a concession that every true Christian ought to make to his neighbour. Merchant, however, reminded him that, upon the same plea, he would have been justified in demanding twice as much as his due; and at length they agreed (L'Estrange with many wry faces) to split the difference, by construing the agreement according to its letter.

What a tedious piece of work was the Othello of Booth that night!—that wonderful contention between love and passion, which the great actor displayed before his rapt and breathless audience with so astonishing and life-like a reality as to cause one utterly to forget that the character was the

creation of a poet—perhaps the greatest tribute to Shakspeare's genius that can be conceived! At length, "Woman's a Riddle," a proposition which the Moor had been practically exemplifying, came on for a first hearing. As it proceeded, I discovered that Mr. Bullock's alterations were neither many nor important; and it may be forgiven to a sanguine, and, perhaps, a conceited youth, to confess that I considered them (and really I believe they were) as blemishes upon my production. However, the piece was well received—the curtain fell amidst considerable applause, and Merchant and I marched out of the play-house, he protesting that I was likely to become a shining ornament of the British stage, and I perfectly assured that I had already done enough to prove that I should be so. The ecstasy of that night!

Merchant proposed that we should adjourn to the Cocoa Nut—his common tavern of resort—that we might sanctify our triumph in a flowing bowl. I suggested, however, that we should rather adjourn to Lovell, who had taken much interest in my welfare, and to whom I was in a sense indebted for my good fortune.

"Hang it, no," said he, drawing me away, "the company there is not high enough for the present pitch of our spirits—old worn-out carking souls, who will rather envy than sympathise with our success. The day after a debauch is the time for *them*, when a man's heavy, and stupid, and congenial."

We drank deeply at the Cocoa Nut; but I was no match for Merchant. I had not yet taken my degrees. I proposed that we should return home. The company were too noisy, and I wished to brood over my happy fortune—to hug it, as it were, to my bosom. He peremptorily refused to budge an inch, and bade me sneak home by myself, if I was so minded. For his part, he meant to make a night of it. Finding that he was obstinate, I took him at his word, upon his promise to follow me within three hours. He was too fuddled, he said, to trust to his feet in the dark. Aurora must show him a light.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH THE HOPES OF RICHARD SAVAGE MEET A SEVERE REBUFF, WHICH, NEVERTHELESS, DOES NOT DETER HIM FROM TRYING HIS FORTUNE A SECOND TIME.

WHEN I awoke the next morning, great was my surprise at discovering that my friend Merchant had not found his way home; but concluding that he had been provided with a bed at the Cocoa Nut, I made myself easy respecting him, and prepared to wait upon Mr. Bullock. He received me very courteously.

"Well, here you are," said he, with his accustomed grin. "I fully expected to see you. So we brought you through pretty well, I think. How did you like the acting?"

"Most excellent, indeed, sir. The success of my little piece altogether exceeds my expectations."

"It was very fair, I grant you," he returned; "but you must not be misled by the favour shown on a first night. We shall, however, proceed with it. Of course, you mean to try your fortune a second time?"

I replied that I was resolved upon doing so.

"I would," said he; "you have a pretty talent that way, and may, one of these days, make it answer your purpose."

One of these days! I hardly liked the phrase. Mr. Bullock, however, began to talk volubly on indifferent topics, and at length, taking out his watch, regarded it for a time with attention, then placed it to his ear, and then stared me in the face. The hint was not to be mistaken. Unwilling as at all times I was (some of my friends will say no) to enter upon the discussion of money matters, yet I was considerably more so in my younger days. But Mr. Bullock left me no alternative. I looked foolish, coughed, and at last brought out—

"I do not expect, sir, that the profits upon my play will be very large—but——"

"Large!" cried he, "a very little is given now-a-days for such things, and that is contingent upon their continued success. For my part, I hardly expect to get a farthing from it."

"Indeed!" said I, greatly chap-fallen, "surely Mr. Bullock——"

"Surely what, Mr. Savage?" he interrupted, with a smile of benevolence; "what is the young gentleman driving at?"

"Why, sir," I replied, "my drift is this. Whatever they be, small or large, my necessities compel me to hope that it will not be long before my half-share will be forthcoming."

I only do justice to Mr. Bullock's abilities as an actor, when I acknowledge that the face he presented, when I left off speaking, was an incomparable specimen of the tragi-comical. He presently fell back in his chair, raising his eyes to the ceiling.

"Half share!" he exclaimed, at length, in a loud whisper; "there must be some mistake here. Ha! ha! I see—you are a wicked wag. You have been putting off one of our friend Lovell's jests upon me. Half share! so like him!" And here he hugged himself together, and shook his head, as though it were one of the most ecstatic drolleries in life.

I did not participate his gaiety.

"There is no mistake," said I; "or, if there is, it is one into which you yourself have fallen. It is no jest of Mr. Lovell, but a serious affair of my own. I hope, Mr. Bullock, you will suffer us to understand each other as quickly as may be."

"There was no agreement," said he, hastily, "no agreement," holding out his spread hands appealingly; "don't you observe? I wonder Lovell should have led you to expect any thing from a first attempt. When I consent to alter and adapt a play for the theatre, the profits, if any, belong solely to me. You ought to thank me for having secured a footing for you."

The cool impudence of the man amazed and enraged me.

"And what have you done, sir, to my play?" I exclaimed, with vehemence, "that can entitle you to the whole advantage derived from its representation?"

"What have I done!" he replied, "I wish I had had nothing to do with it, for my part. Why, sir, I trimmed the colt; young man, I trimmed the colt, and a rough one it was when it first came under my hands."

"And you sold it to pay the expenses, it seems, Mr. Bullock. Deduct your charge for the trimming, and hand me over the balance of the animal. Come, don't colt me, sir."

"Very good indeed; very good," he cried; "you have a happy vein for comedy. No, no, young gentleman," approaching me, and making for my hand, which I withdrew: "inquire, and you will find I am correct. It is never done in these cases, I assure you. I wish you well, and I am sure you deserve my good wishes. Yours is a very pretty genius for comedy, believe me."

At this moment I would willingly have afforded him a proof of my tragic powers, by flying upon him, and pounding his wretched carcass. His inquisitive-looking nose stood forth, and seemed to invite me to screw it off. With some difficulty I mastered my rage.

"I shall make no secret of the manner in which you have treated me," said I; "and I wish you a very good morning."

He bustled before me to the door, which he opened with much complaisance.

"You will think better of it, I know you will," he said. "But you must try your hand again; we can't afford to lose you, indeed we can't. If I can be of the slightest service to you, command me."

I burst from him almost choking with rage and mortification. A moment longer, and the fellow had seen the tears rush out of my eyes, and if he had, it might have been the worse for him.

When I reached home, Merchant, I learned, had not been there. I was vexed with him that he should have deserted me at such a time. It was he who had advised

so early an application to Bullock, although neither of us expected that immediate money would be forthcoming. He knew that I was utterly without cash, and the cupboard being empty, I had gone without my breakfast. Somewhat disposed to form a disparaging estimate of mankind in general, I hastened down Drury Lane, thinking that I might, perchance, find him with his friend Mr. Lovell.

I discovered that gentleman in earnest and angry parley with a stranger—a grave and business-like man about the middle age.

"Then I am not to look for it from you?" said the stranger; "this is very scandalous conduct, let me tell you, sir."

"Call it what you please—tell me what you like, Stephens," cried Lovell. "I say no; you are not to look for it, unless you advance more mineral substance."

"Mineral substance!" cried the other; "have I not already advanced you every farthing of the sum you engaged to do it for?"

"That avails not," said Lovell. "Ha! my friend," to me, "Stephens, look at that morning star of letters. Crowned with bays, he comes. Well, you have settled with Bullock? Stephens attend. Hear how genius is sometimes rewarded."

I returned a ghastly grin, and in few words made him acquainted with the treatment I had experienced.

Lovell smote the table violently with his fist.

"And Bullock has served you thus? Can any one tell me where honesty, the smallest piece of it, is to be found? I don't know, but my strong impression is that, if any where, it is to be met with in Newgate. They *must* hang the honest men. Bullock! what dreadful beef that fellow would make! too bad for jackdaws and magpies, who are not half such thieves as he. Fie! fie! I'm ashamed of you, Stephens; smiling, chuckling over a shocking piece of wickedness that might make the hair of a negro stand on end. Oh! I am moved, very much moved. Upon my soul, a little more and I should cry."

And the man spoke the truth. He was really affected.

"Pardon me, young man," said Mr. Stephens, "I was not smiling at your distress. Far from it. I feel for you, and despise the man who has treated you so. I was smiling at Mr. Lovell, who vents so much indignation against others, that he has none left for himself. Tell me which is worse, the man who takes your work and won't give you the money for it, or the man who takes my money and won't give me his work. Ha! Mr. Lovell, I have you there. Come, Lovell, I don't wish to make you angry; but is it not too bad? Really, sir——"

"Really, sir," began Lovell; but he could not proceed. His confusion was distressing. I arose to leave. He followed me to the door.

"Have you seen Merchant to-day?" I inquired.

"I have not, Mr. Savage," said he, nudging me, and attempting a look of unconcern. "He had me there, as he says; fairly caught, by G—! A hard thing that a man can't moralise for a moment without catching it over the knuckles. Jack Lovell will take better care of Jack Lovell another time. And yet, if I thought I was no better than Bullock—Why, he has plenty of money, that Stephens—and all scooped out of authors' heads. His wife's wedding-ring, twenty years ago, was all the gold he had in his house, and now he could buy up all the married fourth-fingers in the kingdom."

The meanness of Bullock, the moral laxity of Lovell, and the unaccountable absence of Merchant, which now began to look suspicious, by no means improved the opinion of the world I had been led to form half an hour previously. I wandered about the streets for some hours in a state of desponding perplexity, and at length returned home, faint, tired, and disgusted.

I found Merchant stretched upon the bed. He started up as I approached. His looks were haggard, and his dress was in the utmost disorder.

"You see before you just such a monstrous fool, Savage," said he, "as people write about in little books for little children, to make the moral the stronger. I'm a fellow for

boys to make mouths at. A mad dog is a sage to me. A baby's rattle to my brains would be laying fearful odds. A goose, deficient from the egg upwards——"

"A truce to this," said I. "What do mean? Where have you been? What's the matter?"

"Half drunk still," he muttered. "I wish this confounded headache were the worst of it. First, tell me what you have done with Bullock?"

I entered upon that story, which I took care should not lose of its full effect. Indeed, I was not very well pleased with Merchant. It was plain he had been making a fool of himself, and I by no means liked the levity of expression which he employed in reprehension of his conduct. I have since known and have practised a lightness of phrase, when my heart has been heavy indeed.

When I had concluded, Merchant struck his forehead with his fist. "Savage!" he said, springing up, "have you a mind to do an act at once of justice and of mercy? If you have, take up that poker and knock me on the head with it. Why did you leave me last night? I've been bubbled by two sharpers out of every farthing we had in the world."

To bear misfortunes with equanimity, ever was, and is still, one of my virtues. Smile, if you please, my respectable enemy, and if it will gratify you to say so, call it my only one. I offered such consolation as words afford, and after some time, succeeded in partially restoring his tranquillity.

"We had better part," he said. "I will repay you what I owe on the first opportunity. We shall both of us do better apart."

"Of that we will talk another time," I replied; "at present, I want to know where I can get a dinner. I have not broken my fast to-day."

His eye wandered towards my trunk, and rested on it. He sighed as he said, "You have some wearing apparel there, for which you have no immediate occasion. The pawnbroker will lend you a fair sum upon it."

I availed myself of the hint without ceremony, and selecting some of my least necessary articles of clothing,

carried them away forthwith to a pawnbroker, who advanced three guineas upon them. Merchant's spirits were greatly revived by the sight of the money, not a farthing of which, however, would he touch.

"You must get away hence without delay," said he, "or I will not answer for your remaining goods and chattels. I promised Gammer Skegg her arrears of rent to-night. Oh that I had discharged them on the instant! and the old witch will be standing in the passage to-morrow morning, broom in paw, to intercept me. She has already hinted something about my 'young friend's box,' as a security. You do not recognise any particular attachment towards that box, for its own sake, or for the sake of others? Well, then, its contents may easily be removed."

As I could by no means clearly distinguish the moral propriety, on the part of Mrs. Skegg, of laying her hands on my property in satisfaction of a debt incurred by another, I snatched a hasty meal, and engaged a small lodging in Shoe Lane, whither, by small portions at a time, I conveyed my clothes.

I met Merchant, by appointment, on the following morning. He laughed heartily as he shook me by the hand.

"So, then, you have eluded your torment?" said I. "Or has she lent ear to your excuses once more?"

"I lay at my sister's in Westminster, last night," he replied coolly. "Don't stare;" and he took me by the arm, and led me away with him. "Walpole's friends, who are determined to make a miracle of him, or who attempt to make the world believe that he is one, say that he has an innate talent—a genius for finance. They assert that he has a mode of managing his accounts that is quite mysterious. My genius that way is at least equal to Walpole's."

"What! you do not mean to say that you have left your lodging without notice?"

"The venerable Skegg stands at this moment transfixed—your trunk agape before her," he replied. "Poor old girl! I see her now in my mind's eye, distinctly, and mean really to see her shortly, when I get some money."

"But not to have told her—Oh, Merchant! I am sorry you have done this."

"Don't be foolish, child. Your morals are very good, I dare say; but they are not yet seasoned. I have taken the best means of securing payment to her. Don't you know that some people will have the value of your debt out of you—either from your purse or your feelings? If I charged her a fair way-of-the-world price for her insults, we should be about even: but I scorn that. She shall be paid. Have you remarked her nails latterly? She cuts 'em when you pay your rent, and lets 'em grow as it augments. Preserve me from her present talons! The worst of it is, her wretched spouse will have to undergo her horny vengeance."

Without a friend in the world, except Burridge, whom my obstinacy had, as I believed, alienated—and Myte (if he ought to be called a friend), who had been too glad, when I declined his offer, to take me at my word—is it wonderful that I should have attached myself to such associates as chance had thrown in my way, even though they were not such as the worldly wise, or the wisely virtuous, would have approved? It must be remembered that I was young, and that morality, in this good kingdom of ours, is made too grave for youth, and is not accounted morality if it is not very grave indeed; and that, moreover, whether grave or otherwise, I had no means of obtaining an introduction to those who were in the practice, or in the profession, of it.

From these worthies, to wit, Merchant, Lovell, and their companions, I received such encouragement to venture a second time into the dramatic field, as is to be extracted from slaps on the shoulder, hyperbolical praises of my talents, and scornful depreciation of the talents of others, who by some extraordinary good luck, or exertion of interest, or defect of judgment in the public, were in full possession of the town. In the mean time, although these incitements had their effect upon me, I was daily becoming less able to respond to them. I had pawned nearly all my clothes—the money I had raised upon them was gone; and one night Ludlow's silver buckles, the last articles

of the slightest value I possessed in the world, were in my hand, awaiting the decision of this question—were they also to go? necessity—the lord-keeper of too many a man's conscience—pronounced swift judgment. They followed the rest.

But I did not part with them so lightly as the rest. On the contrary, I began to reflect, and with no great satisfaction, upon the course of life I had been pursuing, or rather, following, lately. Much that Ludlow had endeavoured to impress upon me, during his illness, returned to my memory and to my mind. It was the common traditional advice, true and trite, such as most of us have heard, too many of us have neglected, and all of us in our time have disseminated; but it had been uttered by lips that were now closed for ever, and by one, the only one, who had ever loved me in the world. The poor sum I had obtained upon these sole mementos of my friend must not be squandered upon Lovell, or wasted with Merchant. I must make it hold out as long as possible.

And now I bethought me of Martin and his wife at Wapping. They would, probably, permit me to occupy a room in their house, till my second play, in which I had made some small progress, was completed. As to its acceptance by the theatre, and success with the town, the reception of 'Woman's a Riddle,' would not permit me to entertain a doubt on those points. No sooner had this expedient entered my head—while it was yet forming into a resolution—than an obstacle arose which compelled me to pause. My clothes were now become—not shabby, indeed—but doubtfully decent. My pride revolted against the notion of appearing before this worthy couple so meanly clad. I had some vague belief—a belief which time and experience have confirmed—that a bad coat on a gentleman's back will be endured by none. Princes and lords avoid; merchants and men of money contemn; the mob—ay, beggars insult its possessor. "The little dogs and all, Tray, Blanche, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at him."

While I was debating this stubborn case within me, I had walked a considerable distance towards the west, and

was suddenly awakened from my reverie by a person, who hastily thrust something into my hand, and then betook himself to his heels. Turning quickly round, I beheld a very little man plying his legs with extraordinary energy; with such vigour, indeed, that his upturned feet appeared to be nearly upon a level with his head. I could not be mistaken. It was Myte. Consigning to my pocket his gift, whatever it might be—for it was wrapt in paper—I gave chase to the old gentleman, and shortly came up with him.

"Don't speak," said he, kicking out his leg as he stood supported by the railings of a house; "can't answer yet, if you do: out of breath—oh! Lud, Lud!"

I suffered him to get his wind, and then addressed him.

"How extraordinary is this, Mr. Myte, that you should run away from me!—What have you thrust into my hand!" producing the packet.

"I shan't tell you," said he; "go away, or I'll yell out for the watch. I won't have my nose snapped off, when I'm doing a good turn to a fellow-creature."

In the mean while, I had opened the paper, which contained two guineas.

"How is this?" I began.

"I thought so," cried Myte, with a sort of explosion like a sneeze. "How is this? Oh, this pride! what a d—— thing, what a dog on its hind legs it is! You don't want money—not you! Toss the rascal counters into the street, and kick me out of it, because I offered them to you."

"My dear sir," I replied, "I will do no such thing. If you will lend me these two guineas, I shall be greatly obliged to you. They will be very serviceable to me just now."

"Ay, now you talk like a man of the world, who has a mind to keep in it as long as he can," he rejoined; "now you talk like Minerva, the Goddess of Wisdom, who sprang out of a head, but seldom springs into one. Serviceable to you! yes, I should think they would be indeed," surveying my clothes minutely, which he was enabled to do by the light of a lamp under which we were standing, and which by no means set them off to the best advantage. "Lud!

if Woful could see you in this plight! Who has a mind to paint the prodigal son? You and a bushel of bean-stalks, and he's nothing to do but to copy."

I was so disgusted with this thoughtless and unfeeling speech, that I was half moved to clap the two guineas into his hand, and to leave him abruptly. He saw by my face that he had offended me, for he broke into—

"There—my tongue's been making a fool of itself again. It doesn't mind me. I've given it up long ago: it's irreclaimable. But I believe it means nothing; therefore, forgive it. I'll tell you something. My little Vandal says you're a genius; and so does the partner of my bosom. We all went to see your play. How we all laughed! Such a roaring, and fizzing, and chuckling! It's a rare thing, Ricardo. And so you got nothing for it, my poor fellow! I've heard the whole story. Let me see; didn't Fletcher write 'Wit without Money'? That *ought* to be a tragedy. Good-by." He shook me by the hand, and was walking dolefully away, but he returned.

"That mother of yours was very ill for two months after the death of *her* mother. Woman's a riddle, you say. That woman is an awful mystery. She has treated you as though you were a fiend, whereas, her house is ready furnished for her reception, No. 2, Pandemonium. His Majesty occupies No. 1. Good-by, again. Why don't you call and see us? We shall be very happy to see you any *night*. Now, think of it."

"I thank you," said I, "and when I can make myself a little more presentable, I will assuredly call and pay my respects to the ladies; and then, perhaps," smiling, "I may make my visit in the day."

He stepped up to me, and stared me in the face, and then favoured me with a grave wink. "You can read the hearts and minds of men, Ricardo," said he; "but I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. It's a monstrous bad world, my boy, and we all help each other to make it worse. I respect you, too. And now I say, we shall be glad to see you *whenever* you come."

And he trotted away briskly.

I could not but acknowledge that the two guineas, of which I had so fortunately become possessed, were a most serviceable increase to my stock of money. Well husbanded, as I resolved it should be, I might make it last till my play should be completed; that is to say, if Martin would grant me house-room, a point that my recruited spirits impelled me to ascertain at once. There was, in truth, a good reason for my so doing. I had discharged my lodging that morning, and my small change of linen, tied up in a handkerchief, was waiting for me in the care of the woman of the house. This I called for, and obtained, with a glass of gin into the bargain, a farewell manifestation of good will on the part of the woman, which she insisted I should not decline.

In due time, I found myself at Martin's door, at which, after a moment's hesitation, I knocked. It was opened by his wife. At first she did not know me, but upon hearing my voice, she set up a loud ejaculation, and pulling me into the passage, threw her arms about me and kissed me.

"He's come at last," she exclaimed—"here! Martin! Mr. Savage has come at last. Now, I know you won't be offended with a poor silly woman for taking such a liberty; but I could not help it—indeed, now. Deary me! well, I am *so* glad. Where's that man of mine? But walk in."

Martin had been asleep; but as we entered was rising from his chair, rubbing his eyes.

He greeted me with a grave smile and an honest shake of the hand. "And you have come to see us at last, Mr. Savage?" he said. "We thought you had forgotten us."

"He!" cried Mrs. Martin, "he's not the young gentleman to do that. D'ye suppose he's had nothing else to do but to think of us folks? But he looks ill, doesn't he?—poor dear! And what has he got under his arm? A bundle, I declare. Give it me, and sit down, do. I'll get out the supper."

I inquired after my friend Simon.

"Ah!" cried Mrs. Martin from the cupboard, with a deep sigh. "He's left us, Mr. Savage: left his parents, he has: 'listed in the Coldstream's, his father's regiment. He

wouldn't be said nay to; and we expect him to be sent abroad in a few weeks."

"He'll make his way, I dare say," said Martin.

"Make his way? yes, John, by the blessing of God I hope he may; but we must have our feelings. He was always talking of you. You was a great favourite of his, I promise you that. Indeed you was. Honest, good youth is Simon, as ever broke bread."

"Come, bring out your bread and cheese, mother, and don't trouble Mr. Savage with our affairs," said Martin: "how is your worthy friend, Mr. Ludlow, sir? and the colonel?"

There was such a native goodness about this simple couple—something so natural—so genuine—that I, who never knew how to make those distinctions—to draw those lines which the world is perpetually making and drawing to the confusion of philosophy and the scandal of religion, made no scruple of talking as freely and unreservedly to them as though—to speak with a due apprehension of the greatness of the privilege—they "moved in the first circles!"

They were deeply interested in my narrative. Mrs. Martin deary me'd—squeezed my hand, patted my cheek, called me by names of endearment, and then fell a-crying; whilst the tailor, having dug a great hole in the cheese, jumped out of his chair, seized his pipe, which he broke in an endeavour to cram more tobacco into it than it would hold, and finally clamoured for the cordial bottle.

"If I had that Mrs. Ludlow," he muttered between his teeth, when I had concluded—"couldn't I!—that's all."

"And so now you're left in distress, like," said Mrs. Martin, compassionately. "Don't turn red, dear young gentleman, it's no crime to be poor."

"If it were," interposed Martin, "we should have been hanged long since."

"Not so bad now though, John," said his wife; "thank Heaven for that."

I now explained the purpose of my coming; telling them that I was not without money, and assuring them that so soon as I got more, I would satisfy them for my lodging.

"Simon's room will just do," said Mrs. Martin, rising: "I'll put the sheets to the fire, and make it comfortable in no time."

"We make no use of it," said her husband; "it stands empty. You may stay as long as you like; but, Mr. Savage, I hope you won't speak of payment again. When you can afford it, I'll take your money readily enough, and release you from what you consider as an obligation."

Having taken possession of my apartment, I laboured at my play diligently, and fed my imagination with hopes of praise and profit, which yielded me more pleasure than their fruition could have bestowed.

One day, I was returning home empty and disconsolate, when I was stopped on Tower Hill by a young gentleman, who, placing his hands upon my shoulders, gazed earnestly in my face, exclaiming, "Dick Freeman, as I hope to be saved. What! don't you know me? Have you forgotten Tom Gregory?"

Rejoiced as I was to see my old friend and school-fellow, I returned his cordial hug in some embarrassment. The meanness of my apparel was the more noticeable when contrasted with the splendour of his. He did not appear, however, to observe it, but insisted that I should dine with him at a neighbouring tavern, whither we adjourned. Gregory was the frank, manly, opened-hearted fellow of former days. I had not been five minutes in his company before I felt myself perfectly at ease. He told me that his father had recently obtained for him a lucrative post in the Customs, and remarking that Fortune did not appear to have treated me quite so well as the baggage ought to have done, and, no doubt, intended to do, he drew forth his purse, and called upon me to help myself without reserve to as much as I pleased.

"And now," said he, having forced two pieces upon me —for more no persuasion could induce me to accept—and having compelled me to promise that when I required a fresh supply I would make no ceremony of having recourse to him—" and now let me hear the strange eventful history which I could not prevail upon Burridge to disclose. He

told me, indeed, that you were the son of great people; but when I pressed him for further particulars, he shook that wise head of his, and said that if I wanted to know how vile human nature was, or could be made, I must turn out into the world, and see it with my own eyes. For my part," he observed in conclusion, "I think the poets lame and tame dogs, after all—the Greeks not less so than the moderns. Whey and buttermilk instead of good honest poison."

I satisfied his curiosity by relating every particular of my fortune since I left school—except the *Short* episode, which I could by no means bring myself to recount; and communicated to him the plan I had formed, and in the prosecution of which I had made considerable progress, of placing myself in more comfortable circumstances. He warmly applauded my perseverance, and lent a ready ear to my sanguine anticipations of a golden harvest; and telling me that he would make it his particular business to learn the best channel of introduction for my piece, he took my direction, and promised to call upon me in a very few days.

From this time forth Gregory and I were almost inseparable during his hours of leisure. My play was at length finished, and called "Love in a Veil," and accompanied by a respectful letter, despatched to Mr. Wilks, a player, as all the world knew, of no small celebrity at that period, and, moreover, one of the patentees of Drury Lane Theatre.

Gregory had learned that Wilks was a man from whom I was certain of receiving polite and considerate treatment; and I had gathered sufficient from Lovell, Merchant, and others, to assure me that I could not be far wrong in entrusting my piece to his hands. A degree of stiffness and pomposity was ascribed to him by some—a sort of *noli me tangere* sensitiveness—as though he expected every moment his dignity to be infringed upon; but others told me he had a heart whose dignity was intrinsic; that he was both by feeling and habit a gentleman; and that if titles were conferred upon worth, instead of birth, and upon unsullied

honour, instead of brazen reputation—Wilks for one had sat in the Upper House long ago, whilst certain peers had never sat there at all.

CHAPTER XVI.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE BOWS TO A NEW ACQUAINTANCE, AND MAKES A SECOND EXPERIMENT UPON THE PATIENCE OF THE PUBLIC.—MR. WILKS INTRODUCES HIM TO SIR RICHARD STEELE.

About a fortnight after I had sent my comedy to Mr. Wilks, Gregory handed me a letter from that gentleman, which had been brought to his lodgings. I had addressed the play from thence, Gregory's abode being in a less remote and a more learned quarter of the town. The letter was couched in very polite terms; and while it contained a highly flattering opinion of the piece, somewhat dashed my expectations by the intimation that the then present time of the year was extremely unfavourable to the production of trifles of that description. The writer, however, desired to see me on the following morning.

"I presume you intend to wait upon Mr. Wilks," said Gregory, when I had finished the perusal of the letter.

"Of course I do," I replied. "Why should you doubt it?"

"Then I mean to speak plainly to you, as I used to do at school," he returned, "and if you're offended with me, I can't help it. Hang your pride—what do I care about it?—though it does imply a mean opinion of me; and you have no right to entertain *that* of your friend. You must let me lend you one of my suits; for upon my soul, those clothes of yours (*don't* I speak plain?) would get a man hooted at Tyburn, unless he had committed some extraordinarily excellent murder that made him valued for himself alone. I sounded Martin about making you a new suit, for which I would have advanced the money, to be returned out of the profits of your play, (and I mean to

have every farthing, I can tell you,) but the sad and serious fellow objected that it would be indelicate, and declined to draw a stitch without your cognisance and approbation; though his wife—dear little natural soul!—did clasp her hands under her chin and cry, 'La me! wouldn't that be a nice surprise to the sweet fellow when he woke in the morning! I'd get 'em laid out all ready on a chair, 'gainst he woke; and when he clapt eyes on 'em'—and then she spoke of her Simon, who is always, like cheese to a dinner, brought in last, and served, whether people like it or not."

I was not greatly pleased that Gregory should have interested himself on my behalf in the manner he had just mentioned; nor was it without great difficulty that he prevailed upon me to accept the loan of one of his suits till I could procure a better suit of my own. There is a pleasure in the belief that you are not so well treated by the world as you ought to be, that sustains a man through all the odium of bad clothes, and makes the dinnerless day endurable. The worst of it is, the world, which ill-treats no man for his own sake, knows and cares nothing about the matter; and the enthusiast undergoes the sufferings, without partaking the merit, of the martyr. If a man could thoroughly know life before it was time to leave it—could know what is due to himself, owing from others, and provided for us all, and knowing this, permitted himself to starve, or consented to be starved—then would he be worthy of the fate which knaves dole out to fools, and call charity; stale crumbs from loaves kneaded by obedient ignorance, and cut up into thick satisfactory slices for gorbelly wealth and its privileged progeny, to the third and fourth generation.

Mr. Wilks received me just as I had reason to expect: he was at once humane, considerate, and polite. He told me, that whatever the merit of my play might be, it could hardly prove a source of much advantage to me, if brought out so late in the season. He added, however, that its immediate production might be of incidental benefit to me. I was curious to know his meaning.

"May I inquire," said he, "how you came to send your

play to me? It is true, I am a manager of the theatre, but I have never set myself up for a judge of dramatic performances; and, indeed, have studiously abstained from taking upon myself any part of the responsibility which attaches itself to a decision upon them. Now, there is a gentleman amongst us to whom it seems to me surprising that you had not applied——"

"Mr. Cibber?" I inquired: "I have heard that Mr. Cibber is a great judge——"

"I do not mean Mr. Cibber," he returned. "Cibber is a worthy man, and has a due opinion of his own merit, as we all have; although all of us do not choose to let the world see it. To say the truth, the man who wrote 'The Careless Husband' must be a man of some merit. But I meant a man of far higher pretensions—Sir Richard Steele."

"I do not know, sir," said I, "whether any particulars of my unfortunate history may have reached your ear; but I am indirectly connected with Colonel Brett, between whom and Sir Richard a very close intimacy subsists. I refrained from sending my play to him on that account, and on that account alone."

"Mr. Savage," said Wilks, "I *do* know your history, and so does Sir Richard Steele. You are quite mistaken, I assure you, if you suppose that any man could influence Sir Richard to do an injustice, or to pass a slight upon another; and you are not less in error if you imagine that Colonel Brett would instigate him against you. I have heard the colonel speak of you in the highest terms."

I explained that I had no such suspicion of Colonel Brett, and that my reason for declining to submit my play to Sir Richard was, lest it should be said that I owed any advancement I might attain to my mother's connections.

"To that person," I said, in conclusion, "I will owe nothing."

"I thought," said he, "I beg pardon—I do not mean to be impertinently curious; but I was told that you have made several efforts to prevail upon Mrs. Brett to acknowledge you."

"I have written to her," I replied; "and I have seen

her—and now I have seen her for the last time. She may make herself easy. I shall trouble her no more."

"And why so?"

"Because it is a trouble to me at the same time. Were she to offer me her love, or her money, I should despise her, if possible, more than I do now. She is a woman of spirit, Mr. Wilks; I hope she may remain so. Her consistency in wickedness is her only title to my respect. The instant she relents, I shall scorn her."

Mr. Wilks looked extremely uneasy while I was uttering this rodomontade.

"A very sad pity," he said, shrugging his shoulders. He presently changed the subject. "This is not your first play, I think, Mr. Savage?"

"No, sir, I confided a small piece to Mr. Bullock, who——"

"Placed the profits in his own pocket," interrupted Wilks. "Oh! this money! It ought to be worth more than it is, seeing the devices men practise to lay hold upon it. Mr. Bullock, sir, is a person who, it is to be hoped, loves God better than man, and, it is to be feared, loves himself above all. Enough of him. I have something pleasant to tell you. Sir Richard Steele is very desirous of seeing you. You will call upon me again in a few days, when I shall be able to tell you about what time we shall bring out your play. In the mean time, I shall have got from Sir Richard when it will be convenient that you should wait upon him."

I expressed my acknowledgments of his kindness, and saying I would trespass upon his time no longer, arose to take leave.

He took me by the hand. "Pardon me—one moment." He stood for some time in apparent reflection, and then said, somewhat abruptly—"Mr. Savage, you see a man before you who has known more distress than he sincerely hopes you will ever be called upon to suffer; who has, many a time wanted a friend to say to him, 'Wilks, take this, or that—*whatever it might be*'" (he said these last words with an emphasis), "and who has sometimes found

such a friend. You must permit me to show my sense of your merit in the manner most agreeable to myself."

So saying, he placed a purse into my hand.

I hesitated, and was about to decline it. I know not why I should have declined it; for, if it be a disgrace to accept money, or any thing else, when it is freely offered, I cannot see how there can be any merit in the tender. But concerning this I shall have more heartfelt occasion to speak, in the sequel. I would not speak of it at all, now or hereafter, but that there are certain mean wretches in the world who take advantage of a man in this way; who offer money with a show of friendship, and think they purchase with it a flatterer and a slave; and there are wretches still more mean, who will tell them that they have done so; as, in their own case, indeed they have.

I know that I obliged Wilks by taking the money. He told me so, and I believed him. And for many a sum of money was I his debtor (he would not have permitted me to say this) afterwards. And Wilks would have cut his tongue out with his right hand, and his right hand off with his left, if he could suppose it possible that his tongue would speak to me, or to others, of what his right hand had given. And he could not abide gratitude—such as gaspers, and hand-raisers, and oily-knee'd grovellers undertake—another merit of his; for many of your benefactors love to stand proxy for the Almighty.

I took my leave of him with such thanks as my heart dictated, and sallied into the street more impressed, I am ashamed to say—but I should be more ashamed to keep it back—with a sense of my own merit, than of the generosity of Mr. Wilks. As I was ever one of those who, whenever a stroke of unexpected good fortune befalls them, cannot keep it to themselves, but must forthwith impart it to somebody, I determined, my immediate friend, Gregory, being engaged at the Custom House, upon seeking Merchant. A man of business, however methodical, is sometimes missing. You cannot light upon him. But a man without money, who hangs loose upon the town, is always to be found. I took my chance of Merchant in Drury Lane, and found him there.

He stared at the elegance of my apparel. "Eh? how is this?" said he, "what slice of a rainbow has fallen to your share? But I forgot. You lodge with a tailor. Come, come, you outstrip your beard. Poor Martin! but martins build in strange places."

I did not think it worth while to undeceive him.

"Why, you know, Merchant, a man must make a figure in the world, if he wishes to hold his footing in it. But you look melancholy. We must dine together."

"Life is a scene of misery," said he; "but that every body knows who has stared up at the oracular mouth of his grandmother. Poor Lovell lies dead above stairs."

I was shocked beyond expression. I had seen him only a few days previously.

"He went off at three days' notice," resumed Merchant, "and, of course, I am very sorry for it. But I am most sorry that he should have insisted upon seeing me in his last moments. Such scenes give a fellow the spleen. Can't a man go on a long journey without asking all his friends to see him off?"

"What did he say to you?" I inquired.

"Don't ask me. He wished chiefly that you should be sent for, saying it would be a salutary lesson to you as long as you lived. He had turned over a new leaf, as he called it, during the last week or two, and was going on, I believe, fairly enough; Stephens had hopes of him; when, as Fate would have it, Death comes and trips up his heels. You should have seen him, or rather, you should not have seen him, last night. There was Stephens by his side, holding his hand; his companions, myself included, standing about the room, talking in knots of two or three—poking their fingers, raising their shoulders, lifting their eyebrows at each other. Whispers—'depend upon this'—'I'm sure of that'—'poor fellow'—'his time's come'—and more of that kind. Tomkins, the host, and his wife, in a corner, in tribulation for their long score—the only sincere mourners present. And *he!* heavens! I shall never forget it! raving, all unprepared, hideous surprise—all overtaken—'What is this?' 'How

is this?' '*Why* is this?' with a high voice, as though not himself, but a strange spirit were calling forth from him, wringing his hands, lamenting his past deeds—his misdeeds, he called them—adjuring us all, as we hoped for mercy, to pray for him first, and ourselves afterwards."

"This is a very frightful account," said I. There was something in Merchant's manner of telling it that made it so. "He died shortly afterwards—I hope easily?"

"I believe he did. None but a doctor, or a madman, could have stayed in the room till he did die. He's gone; but these scenes do one no good, and I'll tell you why. It is not a living but a dying man that speaks; and a dying man who wants to live! It is fear that cries out in agony, not penitence that prays. Therefore, it proves nothing—it teaches nothing. Poor man! he talked of his vices—his follies—his crimes; and what he would do if he were permitted to live, which never would have been done. The best man that ever lived might have died thus."

"In his senses, as poor Lovell was, he could not," said I (the scene I had just heard had set me upon moralising). "What he meant by his crimes probably was, the opportunities that had been afforded him which he had wasted. I question whether men of good intentions, but of no active perseverance or vigour, do not, on their deathbeds, feel more acutely the good things they have omitted to do, than the bad actions they have done."

"A truce to this," cried Merchant; "if you can derive any moral benefit from what I have told you, I am glad of it. Now, let us have some of your dinner—not here, though—this is too sad a place to eat in. Let us to Covent Garden; and forget our sorrows, awhile, over a steak and a bottle."

"But how," he resumed, as we walked along, "have you contrived to get some money together? Have you had a dream of an old vexed fellow, with a gash in his windpipe, waving you forth to an old tree in the middle of a field; and have you borrowed a spade and dug, and dug till, lo! the aged man's ill-gotten wealth in bags, accurately labelled?"

"I have lately met with an old school-fellow," said I, "who has stood my friend by advancing me a few guineas."

"An old school-fellow, with the old play-ground feelings?" he cried, "how I should like to see such a rarity. He should be laid up in Don Saltero's museum. My flock, with whom I was folded, have got them into wolves' clothing, and the hides fit them to a miracle."

After dinner, when the wine had begun to exercise its influence upon us, Merchant discoursed somewhat wildly.

"You cannot conceive," he said, "how Lovell's death has disconcerted me; I would say 'afflicted,' but that I don't mean to permit any thing in this world, that may happen to myself or to others, to deprive me of that most especial attribute of man—laughter. When a man ceases to be able to laugh, he ought to lie with his ancestors, and make way for the next generation. But my heart is heavy, too, Dick, and all the wine in the cellar over which we are, I suppose, sitting, couldn't heave it into its right place. My honest parents are dead—and they were a worthy couple—or I would take the old lady to task for having made so favourable a report of my young faculties, and remonstrate with the old gentleman for having believed her. Oh! that he had merely taught me to read without minding my stops, and to spell without regarding my orthography—put me out to some trade or calling—so should I have rounded into a worthy citizen, with a fat wife and children of the same pattern, talking very good sense in very bad grammar; my highest felicity a lord mayor's feast; my greatest affliction, vertigo after the custard pudding."

"You don't mean this?" said I, laughing. "Come, come, you have got the vapours."

"I do mean this, and more than this do I mean. Would that I were fit to carry burdens, as poor Tom Otway makes his Jaffier say; a chairman grunting under half a dowager, or a porter with an impregnable skull, and a wholesome bias towards strong beer. But the author-business! ugh!" with a shudder. "Well may an author impress his brains upon prepared rags, with a pen of a foolish bird, that is driven with a rag. To write for Gazetteers and Courants,

daily or weekly! To invent rumours of wars for things like Mist's Journal, or positive pitched battles for Dyer's Letter! To make light of the ten commandments! To do murder for sixpence—steal for a groat, and bear false witness against thy neighbour for a mere nothing! Is it not monstrous? Stephens wants me to make the dying speeches, with a brief account of the sinners, to be ready for the commonalty as soon as the culprits step out of the cart. But no, thank you, I'm for an honest calling. I've set my heart upon it."

"And what may that be?" I inquired.

"I mean to turn highwayman," he replied: "the worst of it is, I fear I lack one requisite that I never can acquire, and two that I have no hope of acquiring. I want three things—courage, pistols, and a good horse. What a glorious profession! The bracing air of Hounslow, Finchley, or Enfield Chase! The healthy exercise! Only think of coming upon an old hunks at a hand-gallop, with a smart 'stand and deliver.' Then to mark his horrid prunella phiz, when the pistol is put to his large mushroom-looking ear. What a falling of limber jaws—what a setting of grey-green eyes—what a twitching of the villanous fingers, when they are compelled at length to draw forth the money he had just wrung from the widow and orphans. And yet," he added gravely, "men meet no applause from the world at large for doing these things; on the contrary, they are invariably, when caught, hanged for them."

"The knowledge of which," said I, "will probably deter you from the pursuit of a profession which obtains so little countenance from society. But I must leave you. I promised to meet my friend Gregory at six o'clock."

Having settled the bill and discharged the waiter, we were about to leave, when Merchant took me by the arm.

"I don't know," said he, "whether, to act consistently, I ought not to knock you down and rifle your pockets; but I have still some of the foolish weakness of the old man upon me. I say, then, can you *lend* me half a guinea?"

I placed the money in his hand, with an intimation that he might have more if he pleased.

"No, no," said he, "this will be sufficient for a time, and this shall be the last time, Richard Savage. If you suppose I have discarded my principles, do you think I have lost my memory? Hang it, it's too bad to take it from you at all, but—Stephens, I am your faithful rogues' chronicler. Not a thief but shall make such a last dying speech, as, were he alive, he'd wish to steal; and I'll set all the old women roaring, with 'Alack! alack! that such a hopeful youth should be cut off in the blossom of his days.' I've laid hold of a bright thought. Stephens deserves hanging if he don't disburse liberally for it. What do you think of 'The Malefactor's Manual, or the Guide to the Gibbet,' with directions for taking it easy on the 'eventful day'—happy phrase, stolen from Addison's Cato; the proper way of smelling at the nosegay—the modish manner of sucking the orange, with speeches for all ages, from fourteen to threescore and ten. What do you think of that, maker of plays? Isn't that good gold to a bookseller?"

"It would have a villanous large sale, I dare say."

"If every rogue bought it, *what* a sale, Dick! why, it would be in almost every body's hands. I should keep a copy by me, for fear of appearing particular, and give one to you, lest you might want it."

Merchant, I dare affirm it, felt as deeply as any man the loss of his friend, Jack Lovell; and yet could he yield himself up to this light, trivial talk! Let him not be condemned. It is well for men when they can thwart the foul fiend thus.

At my second interview with Mr. Wilks, he told me that my play would be produced immediately. Upon this occasion he showed his friendship towards me by cautioning me against encouraging a sanguine expectation of its success. My first piece had been a short one; my second was considerably longer, and of a more ambitious character. Without wounding my self-love, he managed to make me acquainted with his real opinion of the merit of my performance. I discovered that it was not a high one. In justice to myself, I must declare that no length of time

had elapsed since its completion, before I was myself conscious of its many imperfections. He must be a very dull or a very clever fellow, whose composition, at eighteen years of age, will be viewed with complacency by himself six months afterwards. I had seen very little of life—an exact knowledge of which, or of the class of which it is his purpose to delineate, is indispensable to the writer of comedy. I knew nothing of love—how should I? and yet I must needs write upon it. I may say, nevertheless, that there are few modern dramatists, whatever may be their success with the town, who appear to have acquired a more intimate knowledge of the passion than myself. There is no love in modern comedy. When that which is substituted for it is nothing much worse—which too often it is—it is a kind of traditional concomitant to the plot—the machinery that winds up the marriage, in spite of the obstinate guardian, the perverse parents, or the industrious rival.

"I have not yet succeeded in getting Sir Richard Steele to appoint a morning on which to receive you," said Wilks, when the talk concerning my play was ended. "He is party-mad, just now, and has been very much discomposed by a suspension of friendship which has occurred between himself and Mr. Addison, whom he venerates beyond any other human being. He is, however, as kindly disposed towards you as ever. I shall take an early opportunity of entrapping him into an appointment from which he cannot escape."

"On my account, I beg that you will not," said I, colouring. "It is far from my wish to be, or to appear, troublesome to Sir Richard Steele."

"You do not know Sir Richard," he replied, "or you would not be offended, as I perceive you are, at a seeming slight on his part. Not a worthier man breathes, or one who could be more hurt to know that he had hurt the feelings of another. You must not look upon him as one who affects the great man. It is only your very little men, I believe, who wish to be thought your very great ones; and they only succeed, after all, in showing how very little they are."

I was very glad to be assured of this; for your great men were ever my abhorrence. I have, indeed, known considerable men, who have carried about with them an air of greatness; but I have ever thought that it became them even less gracefully than pretenders. There is, in fact, a pretension about it, the more odious by how much less the necessity for pretence.

At length, my play was brought out, in the summer time, at the end of the season. It was indifferently performed, to an audience more patient than plentiful, who neither visited my deficiencies upon the players, nor their sins upon me. In a word, to have done with it for ever, "Love in a Veil," was, as Dryden says,

> ——"not damn'd or hiss'd,
> But with a kind civility dismiss'd.
> There was a glance at parting; such a look,
> As bade me not give o'er for one rebuke."

At all events, I was willing to think so, and the compliments I received upon it from my friends established that opinion within me.

After the performance, I went behind the scenes, whither Mr. Wilks invited my attendance. He introduced me to the players, as one likely to be more intimately associated with them; and drawing me aside, whispered me that Sir Richard Steele had seen my play, and was waiting in an adjoining room to be introduced to me. In some perturbation I followed him thither.

The manner of Sir Richard's reception of me was such as to relieve me at once of all embarrassment.

"I have got you at last, you rogue, you," said he, shaking me heartily by the hand. "Be seated. Well, our play——"

"Did as well as might be expected," said Wilks, hastily. "Do you not think so, Sir Richard?"

"Not a word about it," he replied. "It could not have succeeded better at this time of the year. It does very great credit to your abilities, Mr. Savage; and is a promise of something better—much better. Excuse me."

"I am proud, indeed, of your good opinion of me, Sir Richard," said I.

"Good lad—ingenuous, manly, open," turning to Wilks. "Come, you must sup with me at Will's. I cannot tempt you, Wilks, I suppose?"

"You know my failing," said the other, smiling.

"Your practice will hardly reclaim us young gentlemen, however," said Sir Richard. "Mr. Wilks pays so little regard to appearance, Savage, as to go home to his wife; and so little respect to the town, as to say that he can make himself happy at home. The fact is, neither the men nor the women believe him. The men cannot think how he can be happy at home, with his wife in the house; and the women cannot imagine how a lady, so vilely treated, can suffer him to be happy."

"Better than the best is," returned Wilks; "we do not regard what the men and women say, or what they think."

"Nay, my life on't, they mean you no harm," said Steele; "poor things! it is some merit in them that they can think of any body but themselves, even for a moment. Come, namesake, Will's is but a step—we'll walk there. The carriage shall call for us in two hours."

When we got there, he ordered supper, and proposed that we should retire into a private room. "I want you to myself for an hour or two to-night," he said, leading the way.

Supper being ended, and wine before us, he requested me to relate every particular of my life, from my earliest recollection, entreating me especially, when I came to that portion of my narrative which referred to my mother, to forbear all comments, "which," said he, "like spectacles to a good eye-sight, only obscure and confuse the appearances of things."

Already charmed by the benevolence and frankness of my patron, I did so with alacrity. In obedience to his wish, I stifled those reproaches which the barbarity of my mother, whenever I had occasion to speak of it, called to my lips. I painted such a picture, nevertheless, as I believe, required no heightening. When I had done, he took me by both hands, and said, impressively—

"The inhumanity of your mother, Mr. Savage, entitles you to expect to find, in every man of feeling, a father."

Upon this, concluding that his prohibition was withdrawn, I was about to break forth into invectives against Mrs. Brett, when he checked me with an uplifted hand, and a shudder of the shoulders. "Oh! do not speak of her," he said emphatically.

"Seething the kid in its mother's milk. Ah!" he said, musingly, after a long pause—"that's a delicate device that would just suit her. How comes it, sir," he said, addressing me suddenly, "that you shall find the same person humane and pitiless—generous and niggardly—pious and profane? Have we, all of us, two souls—one given us of God, the other lent us by Satan?"

"That I do not know," I replied. "If we have, I fear some of us make more use of that which is only lent, than of that which has been given us."

"I spoke at random," he returned, "let it pass. The theory was charitably raised by his friends, in behalf of Lorenzo de Medicis. That mother of yours, Mrs. Brett, has good qualities—fine qualities; you smile; but believe me she has. I know her well; nay, I will say thus much, I have reason to be grateful to her. I will tell you at another time why I *am* grateful. It is impossible but she must sometimes feel, and deeply too, her injustice—her inhuman cruelty to you."

"I hope she does, for her own sake," I remarked with some bitterness.

"And for yours, *I* hope," he answered quickly. "But we must do something for you if you will permit us. You will call upon me very early to-morrow morning. That reminds me—where do you live?"

"At Wapping," I brought out with considerable reluctance.

He laughed heartily. "At Wapping! What in the name of Drake, Blake, and Benbow, took you to that land of oakum and tobacco?"

I explained that I was lodging with the friendly fellow who had aided my escape from the crimps; and I took the

opportunity of recalling Martin to his recollection, who had served under him in the Coldstreams.

"I remember him well—a man of a terrible bodily strength; and a very worthy creature. Pray, make my service to him, and beg his acceptance of these two pieces from me. I shall be very glad to see him."

I could dwell too long upon that—the happiest night of my life. Not a word uttered during those three brief hours, but I remember it vividly. Sir Richard Steele! that name can never be uttered by me—the noble being that bore it can never be recalled to my memory without emotion. I had found a friend, and he was a tried and proved one. Heigho! that life, short as it is, should outlive so many friendships! Samuel Johnson, known too late, I retain still, and one—but of her I am soon to speak.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH SAVAGE FINDS A LIBERAL PATRON, AND AT THE DESIRE OF HIS OLD SCHOOLMASTER RENEWS HIS ACQUAINTANCE WITH SINCLAIR, WITH A SPECIMEN OF MR. MYTE'S FINESSE.

Sir Richard Steele soon put me upon a footing of the most familiar and agreeable equality. When I waited upon him on the following morning, I found him brimful of schemes for my advantage, which he poured forth from his generous heart in huddling succession, mightily pleased with each, but dwelling upon none. At length, a consciousness of the vanity of these speculations appeared suddenly to present itself to him.

"Dick," he said, "we shall fall upon some means of making a man of you. You must expect but small advantage from your ingenious play. Towards the close of the season we usually treat the town to stale dishes, which, if they have a strong digestion, they can relish as heartily as the most poignant delicacies we could set before them; if they have no appetite, what signifies it how they fare? But I should like to hear you speak. Have you formed no

plans for your future life? Your birth may claim something higher than a seat among the rabble, or the precarious position of an unprotected wit."

I played the hypocrite in my reply. I entertained a strong repugnance against the modes, and forms, and obligations of business of whatsoever description; and had my natural bias been permitted to determine my course of life, I had probably owned that nothing to do, with a small competence, would have squared with my inclinations more exactly than a large income contingent upon the exercise of laborious diligence.

"The situation in which I have long found myself," I replied, "has not been such as to suggest the notion or to justify the expectation of any settled scheme of life; but if my abilities were thought equal to the discharge of the duties of some subordinate public employment, that would be the destination I should, of all things, prefer."

"A comfortable place under the government, in which a man's opinions are left free to d— the minister if he don't like him?" cried Sir Richard; "ay, that, indeed, is worth thinking upon. We must see to that. As to your abilities, they are not needed, and the less display of 'em, when you obtain your office, the better. You would not willingly be looked upon as an intruder."

"An intruder! Sir Richard!"

"These appointments, Mr. Savage, have been so long the reward of dunces, that they may justly complain when a man of parts succeeds to one. If a genius can't starve, still less can a dunce. There is no precedent for him—there is for the other. If the vessel of state were not manned by dunces, high and low, legislation would soon be at an end—the trade would be knocked on the head. A virtuous ambition must be encouraged among the people. Now, under our blessed system, not a thick head in the kingdom but may reasonably aspire to the highest offices."

Sir Richard plunged once more into a consideration of what was to be done for me; but after devising a variety of excellent plans, a multitude of unobjectionable schemes, he gave up the task in despair. "It's like a man buying

a cane," said he: "the fellow shows him so many, and they're all so good, he doesn't know which to choose. We must put off this subject. Chance frequently does that for a man which he can't do for himself. Let us give chance fair play. In the mean time I shall make you an allowance, and you may as well take the first quarter on the nail; for I have so many invitations to meet his majesty's trusty and well-beloved chief justice in Westminster Hall, which the sheriff kindly undertakes to deliver, that I may not have a guinea about me this day week."

I made several objections to this proposal. I had no sort of right to expect any such evidence of friendship; and although the money was sufficiently desirable, I by no means liked to be under so heavy an obligation. I had lain under too many already. Indeed, hitherto I had almost entirely subsisted upon contributions. Accordingly I respectfully declined his generous offer.

"'S life!" cried Sir Richard—"here's a man declines money when it's freely offered. That bodes no good; I mustn't stir out to-day. After sunshine cometh rain. My good child, I insist upon your taking it. You don't know what a designer I am. I mean to have a return for it in meal or in malt, as the hucksters say." Then stepping up to me, and whispering in my ear, "Do *you* know that I *don't* know whether we may not be more nearly connected one of these days?"

"I do not understand, Sir Richard: more nearly connected!"

He bestowed a wise look upon me, and placed his well-laden purse into my hand gingerly. "You do not understand—nor do I mean you to understand—yet. Understanding comes of the gods, and comes as there is occasion for it, by little and little.

> 'Take the good the gods provide thee;
> *Lovely Thais sits beside thee.*'"

He smiled, nodding his head. "Time will clear up the mystery. The thought this moment crossed me. I mean to entertain it. Leave Wapping without delay. You

ought to perform quarantine in the Tower before you come into Covent Garden. I fear you'll reek of that part of London for some time to come."

The reader may be sure that I went my ways in high spirits, blessing Fortune that she had at length greased her wheel, and given it an upward turn in my favour. I prepared to second Sir Richard's designs on my behalf without delay; and accordingly, when I got home, I communicated to Martin and his wife all that had so favourably befallen me; and drawing out my purse (so lately another's) insisted upon coming to a settlement of the account between us.

Martin heard these good tidings with an evident, but with a grave and serious satisfaction; and having, after some friendly contention, consented to receive a very poor, and, as I thought, insufficient requital of his kindness, which he forthwith handed over to his helpmate, he congratulated me on securing so excellent and valuable a friend as his old captain, in homely but plain and honest terms, such as the polite (for even to affect a heart is vulgar) would not be guilty of such bad taste as to employ. He presently ascended to his garret, after a rough and hearty shake of my hand, a strong invitation to come and see them shortly, and a warm wish for my happiness in the mean time.

Mrs. Martin, for her part, relieved her spirits by copious floods of tears.

"We had become so used to you, Mr. Richard," she sobbed, "that it's almost as bad to part with you, as though—hoping you'll forgive me, dear sir—you was a child of our own. You were so quiet-like, and regular. Who'd ha' thought, while you was a-sitting in that back room, you was a-making up that bootiful play. La, me! how I did laugh last night at it, and so did Martin, too, though he's not one that's given over-much to laughing. We don't want the money. I wish you'd take it back again."

"Indeed I shall not, my dear Mrs. Martin; but if you would give me a glass of your brandy, I should be happy to drink your health and Martin's; and to wish you every happiness."

"That's a dear!" cried Mrs. Martin. "I shall lay by

this money against Simon comes. Poor youth! he's none too much, I warrant him. A glass of brandy! to be sure I will; and a drop of right Nantz, as they call it, it is, I promise you. We buy it of a man that can answer for it."

"What! smuggled, Mrs. Martin! oh, fie!"

"Hush!" said she, with a mock frown; "don't speak that ugly word. It's called duty-free. They tell me no one's a right to pay duty on this side of the Custom House, and that seems very good sense. Let those pay it that have nothing else to do with their money. We have, worse luck!"

So saying, she produced the bottle, and some bread and cheese.

"A bite with it," she resumed, "keeps it from doing harm, and getting into the head. Ah, Mr. Savage," handing me a glass, "I fear you are a very, very proud young gentleman."

"I proud, my good Mrs. Martin! you never were more mistaken."

"Not proud, like; that's not quite what I mean. Not one of them that hold their heads up so high they can't see the puddles, and so make themselves in a worse plight than those that can; not one of those that think the poor, that's no scholars, wasn't made by the same God Almighty, and wasn't going to Him as well as themselves. But you've a very high stomach, Mr. Savage, *you* have."

"I really do not know what you mean," said I, "or in what way I have shown it."

"I was determined I'd tell you of it one of these days, and now I mean to. Now, don't you think I knew what it meant, when you used to go out for a walk, as you said, just when our dinner was put upon the table, and all because you was above being beholden to us poor folks. Many a meal's victuals have you gone without because you was too proud to own you wanted one. You may colour; that's a sign it's the truth I'm speaking. If my master hadn't held me by main force, and said I should have offended you out of all forgiveness, I'd have up and told you of it often. Deary me! well may they call it empty

pride, when it makes people go empty. What are a few meals' victuals, I should like to know? and if——"

Pride is a poor, skulking, scoundrel quality—if it be not a disease, after all—and never looks so much like meanness, as when it has been detected playing its sad and sorry pranks before honest people. In some confusion, I cut the thread of the good woman's discourse, by an earnest and lying assurance, that she was utterly mistaken; and reinstated myself in her best opinion, by promising to dine with her that very day.

In a few days I was comfortably settled in handsome lodgings in Gerrard Street, to which in due time I invited Gregory and Merchant, with such other friends as I selected out of a daily increasing acquaintance, picked up for the most part at taverns. To Gregory, whose excellent qualities day by day won upon me, I became greatly attached. The associations of boyhood endeared him to me, and there was but slight alteration in him. He was as ardent, generous, and high-spirited as ever; but he had parted with a little of that elastic buoyancy which so well became him, and which many good fellows relinquish as the price of their enrolment amongst men; and which many good fellows retain too, for the sake of being boys all their lifetime. My friendship for Merchant was of a totally different character. Of his principles it were idle to speak; for he candidly admitted that he did not know what principles were, as motives to action. He was accustomed to say he would never allow that a finger-post was a walking-stick, and that if men were not actuated by their hearts, what was the use of the throbbing superfluity? In a word, he held, that if every human being breathing were asked what his principles were, you would get the same answer from all, and that no man ever went morally wrong without being conscious of it; but that men did go wrong frequently, nevertheless. Without valuing Merchant very highly, I liked the man. He was no hypocrite, at all events, and had a heart. I wish I could say as much of some whose virtues, "as our rarer monsters are," are more talked of than seen.

With Langley and Myte also I renewed my acquaint-

ance, and introduced Gregory to them. Myte was greatly struck with my friend, who could fall in with his humour, and applaud and enjoy his fooleries. The little man soon became mightily solicitous to learn what were the specialities of Gregory's income, and whence derived; what expectations of a direct nature were his; and whether he could reasonably raise collateral surmises founded upon waning aunts and grandmothers in the socket. To these questions, from time to time propounded, I was enabled to return such answers as caused Myte to rub his ears, and to impart friction to his legs with exceeding satisfaction.

"For," said he, "there's Vandal—just his age, I take it—lorn damsel! I don't mind telling you, but I feel that I'm a shocking old vagabond, deserving of mercy neither from man nor matron, till I've secured a worthy Adam for her. I've seen her shooting love-bolts at mad Tom for some time past; but, hang him! like his namesake, I suspect he's got his senses about him, for all that. Do you think Tom's a-cold? or are his eyes pebbles? If the man's blind, I'm sure I shall be happy to be his dog. And I'll lead him to one who'll restore his sight, and be a jewel in it all the days of his life."

Although Myte was, or affected to be, unconscious of the true state of the case, I had learned the whole of it some weeks before. Tom was neither cold nor blind; and downcast eyes, involuntary blushes, and flutters not to be restrained, whenever he appeared, evinced pretty intelligibly that Mistress Martha had taken an infection similar to that she had communicated. She was, perhaps, sweetly ignorant of the malady she had caused and taken. I say this, out of deference to those more accurate judges of womankind, who conceive that it derogates from the character of innocence to suppose it to know the cause, or even to be aware of the existence, of its own sensations; but I beg leave, in spite of my "perhaps," to retain my own opinion, which is, that when a woman is in love, she is the first to know it.

I was delighted at observing the growing attachment between Myte's darling and my friend Gregory. For both their sakes I was glad. They were, to use a hacknied

phrase, formed for each other. The disposition of both was to be happy; and the deuce is in it, thought I (and doubtless they thought so too), if they can't contrive to be perfectly so. A sweeter-tempered young woman than Martha Myte, or a man of finer disposition than Gregory, were never coupled in this world.

Sir Richard Steele did not know how to assume the patron, nor was I moulded in the nature, or practised in the arts, of the dependant. I considered him as my friend, entitled to my thanks for his benefits, and no more. He was uneasy when I tendered them, and sometimes forbade me, under pain of his displeasure, to hint a syllable of gratitude or obligation. In the mean time, he introduced me to his friends, of whom few men deservedly possessed a greater number—admitted me as a constant guest at his table—allowed me the free use of his library, and supplied me with money liberally, although, it must be confessed, at irregular intervals.

The good word of Sir Richard Steele was no common recommendation, for no man was better beloved; but he was not satisfied with this. He descanted on my misfortunes and my merit upon all occasions. My story became publicly known, enough at least of it to excite an interest in my favour; and the recognition of me in society with Colonel Brett, at the instance of Sir Richard, while it preserved as much of my mother's reputation as remained to her, entitled me to a station from which she was never afterwards able to dislodge me. I had been born an earl, had she willed it; it was never within the scope of her power to degrade me below a gentleman.

Two years were spent in this agreeable intercourse. During this period, very little had been said about settling me in the world, and still less, indeed nothing, had been done towards it. Steele's repugnance against moving in his own affairs, until they became so embarrassed that any movement of his rendered them more hopelessly involved; and his preference of shifts and expedients, when the evil day came, to a well-devised and systematic plan whereby he might release himself from his difficulties, were known

to every body, and to none better than to myself. It were the most unreasonable thing in the world to expect that such a man should have devoted much time to the study of my advancement. Besides, he protested that he required my services. I was useful to him in the arrangement of his accounts; if, Heaven bless the mark! a man can be said to be useful, who places the exigencies of another in so clear a light as to scare him from a consideration of them.

I must not omit to mention that once or twice he hinted darkly about some cunning contrivance that had long lain in the innermost recesses of his brain, by which my fortune and my happiness were to be at once established; but whenever I pressed him to divulge the cherished secret, he shook his head knowingly, and placing his finger on his nose, uttered solemnly the word "Wait!"—and I did so. To wait *for* Sir Richard Steele was, in truth, to tarry; but to wait *with* him on the bank, was better than sailing without him on the stream. Happy days! for ever gone. Well! they *are* gone; but better, perhaps, are to come—a softer radiance before I sink into utter darkness. That morning of my life was bright enough; but I will have no sunshine taken from my west—I cannot afford it.

I had now been, as I have said, two years under the protection of Sir Richard, when Burridge came once more to town. He called upon me at my lodgings. I had reason to believe, not having heard from him, that my obstinate refusal of his kind offer of protection had offended him. Time had worn out his displeasure; for he returned my warm greetings with great cordiality.

"And so I hear from Brett, upon whom I called this morning," said he, "and who told me where you were to be found, that you have entertained the town with two plays; and with a story—your mother's I mean—which will one of these days, perhaps, be turned into a play; and, moreover, that you have acquired the friendship of Sir Richard Steele. You esteem and admire him, of course?"

"Next to yourself, my dear sir, there is no man breathing whom I so much admire and so highly esteem."

"That to myself—humph!—no flattery, Dick; I'm not worth it. I wish you had allowed me to be your friend, in spite of Sir Richard, whose nature, however, is the kindest and the most noble I ever knew in man. If ours were a world of heroes, Steele would be one of the greatest; but being as it is, a system of grovellers, he stands no chance against the knaves."

As Burridge could hardly say any thing that contained or implied a praise of my patron, without gaining my hearty concurrence; and as he told me many things that reflected the highest honour upon him, our conversation lasted a considerable time. I amused him by a recital of many of the foibles and follies of our common friend, at which he laughed heartily; detailing in return several whimsical adventures in which they had been engaged, illustrative of his social character and peculiarities, which my intimate knowledge of the man caused me to relish exceedingly.

"Why, my dear sir," I inquired, "do you not renew your friendship with Sir Richard? He often speaks of you with a degree of warmth that shows his affection for you has suffered no diminution."

"He is very kind," replied Burridge; "but that he ever was. No, Dick, it cannot be. I would rather live upon the memory of past happiness than seek to renew it. Besides, it could not be renewed. The charm would be broken, and no new spell in its place. And take this with you; I have lived so long alone, independent of my former friends, that I have made it, and will continue to make it, a point of pride—of morbid pride, if you will, to keep aloof from them."

"Sir Richard says it is your pride, I confess," said I.

"He knows me very well. He is perfectly right. But, zounds! if it will serve the turn of an old fellow's humour, to sustain his self-love at the expense of his wisdom, why shall not an old fellow serve it? I am altered of late years, and for the worse; he remains, it seems, unchanged. He would find me morose and cynical. I should discover him to be trivial and light. He would laugh at me. I should

look grave at him. He would think me a dullard. I should think him a coxcomb. No, no, it won't do. Alcibiades, in the play, went in search of Timon, but when he found him, Timon did not thank him for his company."

I said no more, but while Burridge looked out at the window, I busied myself in conjecturing how any man could solace or stimulate himself with the suggestions of a false and mortifying pride, and cheat himself into the belief, that to be independent of the world, is to be self-dependent. All is not right within, when all looks wrong without. The man is sufficient to his own happiness; and to take a delight in one's own misery, and in misery of one's own making, is to have the free exercise of one's brains, and to use them backwards. The miller grinds himself, and ho! ho! quoth he, what glorious grist!

"I have not yet told you," he said, turning suddenly from the window, "what, beside the pleasure of seeing you, brought me hither to-day. Your old schoolfellow, Sinclair, is in town. He has left Cambridge, and fraught with health, wealth, and spirits, is impatient to see what is to be seen, hear what is to be heard, and know what is to be known of that which is not worth knowing—good company. I hope you will become acquainted with him."

"If Mr. Sinclair wishes it, I cannot make a moment's objection."

"I have not spoken to him concerning it," returned Burridge, "but I will do so. You must discard the past from your memory—no, you need not do that. Remember that you were boys, and that boys grow into men, and that men are not boys. To judge of the man from the boy, is to refuse an apple in August, because it was confoundedly sour in May. You will find him greatly improved. I am much mistaken if he do not ripen into a fine fellow. You are aware, I believe, that he is highly connected, and that he inherits a considerable fortune. His friendship may be of service to you."

While I disclaimed any desire to cultivate the friendship of Mr. Sinclair on the score of any worldly benefit that might accrue to me from an intimacy with him, I professed

myself, and with truth, very glad of the opportunity presented to me of shaking him by the hand. I told Burridge that his partial kindness to me, and the advantage I had gained over Sinclair on my entrance at school, had, I felt, depressed him below his just level; and that I had frequently wished, and had made several overtures to him, that we should come to a better understanding. (To say the truth, had it been my own case, I could not have endured the superior importance and influence of a junior, even though he were willing to bear his faculties meekly, as, in justice to myself, I must say, I endeavoured to do.) I concluded by begging him to bring Mr. Sinclair with him that very evening, when he should witness how entirely I had banished all animosity from my mind.

He did so. Sinclair was indeed greatly improved. I have seldom seen a man more eminently handsome, or one more calculated to ingratiate himself with his own sex, or to recommend himself to the favour of the women. His manners were polite and prepossessing—his carriage was graceful, and his conversation modest and agreeable. I am recording my impression at the time.

We spent a merry evening. The bottle, that "trotting whipster," circulated nimbly; Burridge became limber and frolicksome; Sinclair narrative and facetious, babbling of college pleasantries, unborrowed of the town; whilst I did my best to establish an opinion of my own consequence, and to make it appear that my merit entitled me to, at least, as large a share of it as I had acquired.

Thenceforth, Sinclair and myself were to be seen together at all places of public resort. The splendour of his appearance, with which my restricted means in no degree permitted me to vie, reflected itself upon me; and the world was pleased to declare that, in the selection of my friends, I not only evinced an excellent taste, but also a politic foresight. I laughed in my sleeve at this; for the world was not accustomed to the sight of Merchant, whose society I vastly preferred, and with whom I consorted, when the world, for the most part, was asleep.

Of all my friends, Langley was the one to whom Sinclair

chiefly attached himself. I do not wonder at it; nor that Langley should have met his advances half way. There was a great similarity between the two gentlemen. They were both rich, or with the prospect of being so; and both indulged a strong persuasion that wealth, of itself, conferred a claim to respect, which set off by birth was not, for an instant, to be questioned. Abilities—genius—these, in their opinion, entitled the possessor of them to no station equal with their own. He belonged to the rank in which he was born; he might, indeed, be received into a higher —upon sufferance. Merit did not earn the position; it was the reward of merit.

That this was the joint creed of Langley and Sinclair was sufficiently obvious, although it was not intruded in a manner offensive to me. It was more especially apparent in their reception of Merchant, which was of so exceedingly civil a description as implied the condescension of very great men to a very little one; but it was most observable when Gregory was present, who did not know how to treat a companion otherwise than as an equal, except when, as in Merchant's case, the extent of his information, his knowledge of life and of human nature, his abilities, and, above all, his misfortunes, commanded his deference, and secured his respect.

"I do not know how it is," said Gregory to me one day, "but I cannot altogether reconcile myself to our old schoolfellow. Burridge may talk of his pippin of August, but, hang him, I think it has a tang of the May sourness about it yet. What is your opinion of him?"

"That he is as young as you," I replied, "and has not that class of follies which find favour with yourself. To me he is very friendly and pleasant, and would be so to you, only that you oppose yourself too palpably to his prevailing foible."

"And why not?" cried Gregory; "confound his 'scutcheon and money-bag! Why is precedence to be granted to them on all occasions? What say you?" turning to Merchant.

"I say," returned Merchant, "as to his 'scutcheon, I

know nothing of it, nor of my own; nor do I wish to know. I saw several heralds at the coronation, and a whimsical class of animals they appeared. They tell you, don't they, that your grandfather's grandfather had a grandfather, whose father's name was Roger, or Hugh?—it is commonly Hugh. Well, Hugh being a troublesome fellow, who can give no account of himself, they kill him at the battle of Hastings. He came in with the Conqueror, and had six feet of land allotted to him. But as to the money-bag—if that is a grievance, it is one that will lessen day by day. To tell you the truth, my finger has been in it, and I never speak ill of my friends. I allow myself no pleasures now-a-days. I cannot afford to be of the fashion. I hope, Gregory, you are not jealous of this handsome schoolfellow?"

"Not I," he replied, laughing, but colouring, too; "if a straight leg and a handsome face were always to carry the day, what would become——"

"Of us," interrupted Merchant; "true. I have hopes that my pernicious phiz may one day be of value to me. I attend all the China sales I hear of, and have seen earthenware monsters, not half so ugly as myself, excite the admiration of the ladies—and fetch high prices too."

Gregory had no cause of jealousy; but had he known his intended father-in-law so well as myself, he might have felt that he had just grounds of suspicion and alarm. Sinclair was a very frequent visitor at Myte's house, and a very welcome one. The little man, to employ a common phrase, did not know how to make too much of him, except when Gregory appeared, and then he did not know how to make enough of himself.

Myte was a singular mixture, or rather, alternation of simplicity and finesse. He could not forbear imparting to me his secret longings. Drawing me aside one morning, he said, "My son Langley tells me that Sinclair—what shall I call him? that must be thought of—he tells me he is as rich as Crœsus or Crassus—either will do, and that he comes of an ancient stock. I wish I had known him earlier."

"Why?" said I, shortly.

"Why?—because there's my Vandal; and he's a string to her bow I should like to try first. If he snapped, we could pull out mad Tom. I don't think Tom's very deep in—do you?"

"I am surprised to hear you talk thus," I replied, "after the encouragement you have given to Mr. Gregory's addresses."

"Encouragement! Ricardo, I have stood by with my finger in my mouth, saying nothing. A mouse in a minster never preached a better sermon of silence than I have done. So far all is well."

"But the young lady—your daughter," I urged—"pray, think, sir, of her happiness."

"That is what I *am* thinking about," he returned; "the little ball on my shoulders has nothing else to do in this world but think about it. Sinclair—Gregory—into the scale with 'em. Sinclair outweighs Gregory; see, he kicks the beam. The higher the rank, the greater the happiness."

"I am glad experience has, long ago, refuted that," I replied. "But you may as well, sir, relinquish at once all hopes of Mr. Sinclair. Your daughter loves Mr. Gregory."

"Loves Mr. Gregory!" exclaimed Myte, with a chuckle —"not so well as she loves rank and riches, I warrant; or my wise preachings, from her infancy upwards, have been utterly thrown away. Have you not seen, Ricardo, at the play-house, an old, square-toed fellow, with a flying periwig, and a cursed choleric, red-ochred face, rush in upon a scene of lovers, and interpose his veto upon the projected nuptials? I think I shall undertake the part of that old fellow."

"And be baffled at last, as the old fellow commonly is," said I, laughing. "No, no—you will let things take their course. Besides, you have no reason to believe that Sinclair prefers your daughter?"

"None—I have none," he answered, shaking his head. "I might frighten away the linnet, and not catch the goldfinch after all. Fool's fowling, that."

From this day forward, if Myte put any schemes into operation, of securing Sinclair for a son-in-law, they were

not openly practised. It is true, for some time I observed that Sinclair paid very particular attentions to the young lady, provoking enough to Gregory, although they were not of such a nature, or so constant, as to justify him in making them the subject of a quarrel; but after some months these were entirely laid aside. I concluded that the absence of encouragement, on the part of Mistress Martha, had caused Sinclair to forego his design of supplanting his friend. Let me be just to him. I do not know that he harboured any such design. So it was, that his attentions ceased. Afterwards, I ventured a shrewd guess as to the cause.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE IS DISCOVERED TO BE IN LOVE; AND EXHIBITS TENDENCIES TOWARDS A PASSION VERY FREQUENTLY GRAFTED UPON IT.—WITH AN UNTOWARD OCCURRENCE, WHICH HAS NO SMALL INFLUENCE ON HIS FUTURE FORTUNE AND HAPPINESS.

I RECEIVED a message one day from Sir Richard Steele, desiring to see me on the following morning. Any requisition from that quarter was certain of obedience from me. I waited upon him at the appointed time. He hastened into the hall when I was announced.

"I am particularly engaged at this moment," said he, taking me by the arm; "a relentless rogue has, by mistake, been shown into me, and wants certain monies. I am reasoning him out of the extravagance of his demands, and have brought his phiz up some yard or two during these last ten minutes. A quarter of an hour, and I'll make him laugh and leave. Stop! go in there—no, come along."

So saying, he hurried into a back room.

"My love," he cried, to a young lady, who had arisen from her chair, "pray do your best to entertain this gentleman, my friend, Mr. Savage, till I return to you, which shall be in a few minutes. Savage—Miss Elizabeth Wil-

fred. Oh! these wanters of money," thrusting his hand under his periwig, "how is it they always have large families, and large sums to make up, when a man hasn't enough money in the house to buy the youngest a coral, or little Jacky his week's gingerbread?" and he left us together.

Miss Wilfred resumed her seat; I took mine. An awkward silence. To Miss Wilfred, the sudden introduction evidently had been as unexpected as to me. For my own part, I was so much surprised (as much, I confess, by the singular beauty of the young lady, as by the abruptness of the case) that I lost, for a moment, my self-possession, which rarely deserted me. And it was impossible, I imagine, that a dolt, however insensible, could have beheld, for the first time, that lovely girl without emotion.

Helpless dog that I am! how can I describe Elizabeth Wilfred? And yet I feel that words could better portray her face than the pencil; for who ever painted soul?—Raphael? hardly. (Kneller, thy women had no souls—the better for thee!) But Spenser and Fletcher! they might assist my sorry inefficiency—those greatest painters of the beauty of women, who have less of earth than of heaven about them. Thus much only will I say, having cudgelled my brains wofully. Her complexion, her mouth, and her eyes were, perhaps, the most charming. Her complexion was dark, but with a warmth upon it; her mouth was more beautiful when she smiled, and most lovely when she was pensive; and her eyes were soft, and serenely sensuous, that (not to speak it irreverently) one could have thought—I have done so—that they might have raised themselves, unblamed, even towards the face of the Almighty. Forgive me the blush that this, when thou readest it, will call into thy cheeks—thou, to whom admiration was as flattery is to the few who are most like thee—thou, whose memory is ever near me, and sustains me—thou—a knell in my heart too truly tells me so—who art lost to me for ever!

We presently fell into conversation; if that may be termed conversation which is, rather, an interchange of

Savage introduced by Sir Richard Steele to Miss Wilfred.

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common and trivial remarks, to which custom exacts an acquiescence on either side. After a time, however, Miss Wilfred said, with a smile,—

"Mr. Savage, you are little aware, I am sure of it, that I have had the pleasure of seeing you before."

"Pardon me, madam, but really I think you must be mistaken. I am certain," I added, "that I have never, till this morning, had the happiness of seeing Miss Wilfred, whom, believe me, I could not readily forget."

"And yet it seems that I have been forgotten," she replied, laughing. In a moment, however, her countenance changed, and she became exceedingly grave.

"I fear I have been very wrong," she said; "pray pardon me."

"For what, dear madam?" I replied. "It is as impossible that I shall not pardon anything you may say, as it would be to believe that you could do any thing wrong."

"You are very polite. But I fear I should give you pain, if I were to mention where I have seen you."

Ishmael Short with the oaf Carnaby rushed into my brain; but no—that was too distant a period. I was partially re-assured by the expression of her face.

"I entreat you, madam" (I stammered somewhat), "to satisfy my curiosity. Still, I cannot but suspect you must be mistaken."

"I have, then, seen you at the house of Mrs. Brett."

"My mother! is it possible?"

"Do not you remember," she rejoined, "a little girl who ran into the room when you were——" she paused, "kneeling to your mother?"

"Good heavens! and are you that——"

"Little girl? I am."

I forbore all inquiry touching my mother; indeed, I did not speak for some time. And who was this lovely girl? I had seen her and remembered her, but I had never before proposed that question to myself. There was no issue of my mother's marriage with Colonel Brett—that I knew. Could she be a niece of the colonel? A long pause ensued, while I was revolving these matters within myself. At

length, for lack of a better subject, I hit upon old Lucas, after whom I made inquiry.

"The good old man is very well," she answered. "I was not aware that you knew him."

"Oh, yes, I have seen him at the house of a friend with whom I lived, some three years since." A second silence of still longer duration. Heaven forgive me!—and my mother!—I began to suspect, and, looking into that sweet face, to fear that I had a sister. A more helpless moon-calf than I must have appeared at the first interview I can scarcely imagine.

"I must positively run away," said Miss Wilfred, at last, and she arose, "Mrs. Brett expects me home before this. My father, I fear, will not be able to release himself from his company so soon as he hoped to have done."

I took heart at the mention of the word "father." "Your father, madam?"

She blushed deeply. "Sir Richard Steele is my father."

The guileful old knight! How he had kept this secret from me so long and so well, was a marvel to me. I had hitherto regarded him, and, in truth, for the most part he was, as the very example of openness. I had not much time, however, to dwell upon this single and signal exception to his general practice, and upon his motives for it, before he entered the room.

"My love," he said, "I have been detained beyond expectation, and almost beyond endurance. But when money is to be talked upon, manners must sit mum in a corner, and ceremony be put by for a court day. You have no time to bestow upon me this morning, I know. Permit Mr. Savage to have the honour of handing you to your chair."

I trembled, as I received her fingers into my hand, and looked, I believe, supremely foolish; not the less so, assuredly, that Sir Richard regarded me with a comical eye of sportive malice. A moment more, and she had tripped through the hall, and was gone. The maidenly dignity, that is not the word—the graciousness of her bow at parting, abided with me till I saw her again, which was an age—not then to be displaced, but renewed. And

whither was she gone? to a house which I had long cursed as an abomination, but which I now began to reverence as a temple. Thenceforth, I thought of her every day in the hour, as Juliet prettily says, and like a coxcomb hugged myself into a belief of the possibility of her meditations sometimes lighting upon me.

In dolorous mood I returned to Sir Richard—a sense of vacancy in my heart which every man in love feels in the absence of his mistress; which all men who have been in love will remember; and which no callous old rogue, who despises the passion, and wots not of it, can be brought to understand. Let him, then, cold and comfortless, go down to his dry grave in ignorance.

"I hope you will allow," said Sir Richard, when I entered the room, "that when I keep a gentleman waiting, I provide beforehand that he shall not feel the tedium of my absence."

"It is not your custom to keep your friends waiting, Sir Richard."

"But when I do, you will add, as a man of gallantry, in praise of the lady, and as a man of truth, in dispraise of me, that I seldom furnish them with such good company."

"I must needs confess that," said I.

"Then I need hardly inquire what is your opinion of Miss Wilfred."

"The most charming young lady in England."

"In England! what! this petty patch of soil! In Europe say, rather; grant her one quarter of the world, I beseech you."

"With all my heart. You may judge my surprise when I learned from Miss Wilfred that you are her father; and the name of the lady with whom she is living."

"Your surprise was natural," he returned; "but I had a motive for my secrecy, which you may, perhaps, learn before time's beard is grown much longer. Meantime, be it known to you that a better girl than my Elizabeth never came of virtuous parents. Your mother has a heart, Mr. Savage, for she loves her."

"And so does my mother's son," thought I, "or is in a fair way of doing so." Sir Richard said no more at pre-

sent; but left me to my own conjectures, which were of the most pleasing description; and which his subsequent proceedings changed into delightful certainty.

From this day, I had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with Miss Wilfred; during which I became as deeply enamoured of the beauty of her mind, as of her person, which, indeed, was the visible counterpart of her mind—all sweetness, harmony, grace, dignity, and innocence.

I was about to say, that if any one of my readers having read my history through shall, flinging the book from him, be tempted to pronounce me a worthless scoundrel, I would bid him consider whether that man can be utterly worthless who could love and reverence as I have done, and as, from my soul I do—such a woman as Elizabeth Wilfred. I was going, therefore, to indulge myself in a flourish of loathsome cant; for the love of virtue is as universal as the practice of it is particular; and we want nothing to make the worst of us equal with the best, but the will. They are not blind who shut their eyes.

A tacit understanding had subsisted between us that Mrs. Brett should, upon no occasion, form the subject of our talk. Nevertheless, she began now to occupy as much of my mind as she had done formerly. In proportion to the hope that I had succeeded in making a favourable impression upon this lovely girl, was the fear lest some infernal machination of my mother's contriving should be put into effect to blast the happiness of a life she had endeavoured to destroy. The question, after all, was this, which of the two was the more powerful, her affection for Elizabeth or her hatred of me. Grant them equal—an extravagant supposition—yet I knew that her leaning was towards evil; and that to execute vengeance, even in natures not essentially bad, is more captivating than to offer redress. She might, indeed, study the happiness of her ward; but she meditated my ruin, or if not that, she abhorred me so sincerely that she would never, could she help it, commit that happiness to my keeping; perhaps, to do her justice, because she would not feel that it was in the right hands; but, certainly, lest I also should be happy.

One evening, warmed with wine, and elevated by a sudden and unexpected accession of money, Steele said to me with his gayest air,—

"Savage, you dog, have you ever thought of marriage, as an ordination to which you may one day be pleased to submit yourself?"

"It has presented itself to my mind, certainly," I replied.

"And made its bow, and taken its leave again," he rejoined; "that's what you would say?"

"Not exactly. I have ever considered, since I have been of an age to make it worth my while to retain what I think, that the truest happiness is to be found in that state."

"It may be so, Dicky—it may be so, my smug moralist. But many of the married fellows do not appear to be a whit happier than your wifeless men. They keep their happiness to themselves, I take it—like a boy who comes suddenly upon a plum cake; he devours it in secret—wipes his mouth—puts his eyes back again, and hopes it may not disagree with him—shockingly heavy at the chest notwithstanding. A great deal depends upon the choice a man makes. Have you ever seen the young lady you could prefer before all others?"

I hesitated a moment; but averse from reserve or duplicity, I resolved to deal frankly with my friend. Besides, there was rapture in the thought that his question pointed to his daughter.

"Is not that question perfectly unnecessary?" I inquired. "You must surely have observed long ago, Sir Richard, that I do prefer a certain young lady before all the world."

"Perhaps I have," he replied. "Still I want to know from you who the young lady is?"

"Miss Elizabeth Wilfred."

Sir Richard raised himself in his chair and arranged his periwig. "Your servant, Mr. Savage; I thought as much. I'll swear you've been dropping soft syllables into the girl's ear."

"Indeed, my dear Sir Richard, I have not. My respect for you——"

"Is very great, no doubt," he interrupted; "but it

would hardly hinder you from telling a pretty woman you loved her, would it? If so, I must do something flagitious to give her a chance of a husband. You are anxious, probably, for an opportunity of confessing your passion?"

"If I might presume to hope," I replied, "which I have never yet done——"

"There you are mistaken. If hope is to begin, you have not yet begun to be in love. Hope follows love as closely as a led-captain a young heir. But now, in few words, you love the girl; but you do not know whether she has any tenderness of regard for you. If we discover that she has, the parson may prick up his ears and the fiddlers screw up their catgut. She is yours, with a thousand pounds I mean to bestow upon her; but which will not, of course, enhance her value to you."

"By heaven! it will not," I exclaimed in an ecstasy, seizing his hand with a degree of familiarity which the occasion excused. "Elizabeth Wilfred without a penny——"

"Would not be worth twopence to the majority of mankind. I have been long hammering upon this project, which will soon, let us hope, be effected."

"Will you permit me to ask," I inquired, "whether Mrs. Brett is aware of your generous intentions in my favour?"

"She is not, but I have not overlooked her. There, Savage, I hope to be of service to you. We have Brett with us; but Elizabeth shall be the peace-maker between you."

"Oh, sir! I fear my mother is implacable. I know too well her relentless nature. She hates me."

"Poor woman! she hates you—yes, but we must make her less wicked, and more wise. Don't you know that hate is love turned inside out?"

"Yes," said I, "because the article is threadbare. The other doesn't look so well, to be sure—but it lasts."

He laughed heartily. "Well, let us, then, call them next-door neighbours."

"Always quarrelling, with a high back wall between

them," and I laughed in my turn. "I despair of her humanity," I added seriously. "No matter, I am her debtor for one thing—she has lent me her pride."

"But not her other passions, I hope," he observed gravely. "Do you not feel that by wronging you she has conceded your superiority? If you cannot forgive her, you should not complain of her. You would gladly accommodate your differences? Speak from your heart, and let me hear what it replies."

"Upon my soul! I would," I answered. "To be compelled to harbour resentment against any human being is abhorrent from me. To feel it—and in spite of myself to feel it—against my own mother, is the one misery of my life—heightened, as it is, tenfold, by a persuasion of the misery it will hereafter entail upon her."

"If my girl loves you," said Sir Richard, "or you can bring her to love you, it shall go hard but we will get your mother into following her example. I will sound Elizabeth upon the point, the carrying of which you have perhaps most at heart. But we will proceed very gingerly at present; for, look you, I not only mean to make your mother love you, but to show her love in the old-fashioned maternal manner, by sundry bank-bills convertible at pleasure into the precious metals. Until we know what you're to have, how can we decide what you're to be? I am going down to Hampton for two or three weeks. Before I return, I shall have digested all my plans. Meanwhile make yourself perfectly easy."

That I could not very readily do this, the sentimental reader will believe. What I was to be, as to position, or what to have of money, was a matter of no present import. My whole soul was so entirely absorbed by Elizabeth, that I disdained to entertain, even for a moment, those vulgar considerations which occupy the major portion of mankind. Money, rank, influence, what were these in comparison with the new passion that had taken possession of my heart? For the knowledge that she returned it, I would gladly have renounced all claim to either, henceforth and for ever. But this I could not know for three long weeks; nor could my

vanity, busy as it was in recalling every thing that had passed between us since I had first been admitted to her presence, suggest any encouragement to me that hope had not, from the beginning, created. Such women as Elizabeth Wilfred—I wish for the sake of human nature and the world's happiness I could believe there are many such—perplex the speculations of the lover more hopelessly than the prude, who unfurls her great fan if the swain ventures upon a preparatory "hem!"—or than the coquette, who listens to two at a time, while she is looking at a third. The unvarying sweetness of mien, the indiscriminate, undistinguishing affability of the dear girl, confounded my perception while it heightened my love. Why, I have heard her address a footman in a tone that has made me envy the lucky rascal, who got thanks for his service that I would willingly have worn his livery to perform.

Some few days before Steele's return to town, I was presented with an occasion of disquiet from a quarter whence I had no previous reason to expect it. I was sitting at a tavern one evening, with Langley and Sinclair, when the latter said, with a casual air—

"Do you know that our friend here has lately made me acquainted with Mrs. Brett? You can bear to hear your mother spoken well of, Savage; which, considering all that I have heard—and it is public enough—is a stretch of generosity for which you cannot be sufficiently commended. She is really a highly agreeable woman. It puzzles a man like me to understand her character. So much seeming good with so much positive evil——"

"And both kept so apart," said Langley; "there is the difficulty. We are all mixed characters, but this lady is an exception. But, Sinclair, you are very little of a philosopher. If you were one at all," he added archly, "you would, ere this, have detected the fascination which draws you to the house of Mrs. Brett, although you might not have been willing or able to resist it."

"What do you mean?" said Sinclair, slightly confused.

"That Mrs. Brett is a very agreeable woman," replied Langley; "but that you have seen one still more agreeable,

for whose sake you are disposed to think so favourably of Mrs. Brett; and this in spite of your friendship for Savage, whose wrongs in that direction might detract from her agreeableness with you."

"You allude to Miss Wilfred?" cried Sinclair; "the reputed natural daughter of your patron, Sir Richard," turning to me. "Have you seen her? I suppose not. She is very well—a finely-proportioned, handsome girl, it cannot be denied, and amiable as beauty, and the consciousness of it, can make her, I believe. But beyond a little allowable flirtation, it is not my design to venture, I assure you."

"Something like this says the boy who takes off his shoes and stockings and ventures into the river, over head and ears, before he can call out to Tom on the stile. But whatever your design may be—shall I say upon Miss Wilfred?—I am greatly mistaken if she has not construed your attentions very differently. I protest, her eyes tell tales that, when I was a young fellow like you, I should have been happy to read."

I started, and turned very pale, or very red, I know not which—nor whether my emotion was remarked. It was well for me that the bottle stood by me.

"Do you think so?" said Sinclair, twitching at his cravat. "I cannot flatter myself that I have particularly observed it. But, plague on't, where did the girl get her high notions? From your lady-mother, I suppose, Savage? To think—which it seems she must—that we could ever become John and Joan! My fortune and expectations; not to speak of——"

"Your person and figure," suggested Langley, with a wink at me.

"Well, they are not despicable, I take it," resumed Sinclair; "all things considered, such a notion is at least preposterous. The vanity of these young women! because a young fellow says a few civil things to 'em, they must needs fancy he's dying for 'em. Ha! ha!" Here he flourished a pinch of snuff under his nose. "Poor, dear, dairy-maid innocence! They little know us sprightly sparks, who never swallow the matrimonial dose——"

"Till it has come too late to do you any good," said Langley, "and then you curse the doctor for a quack."

"We do so—and so he is," cried Sinclair. "Here's Savage looking all the while like a doctor who has swallowed a prescription he made up for his wife."

I left my company somewhat abruptly. The whiffling coxcomb! the superficial fopling! "To think we could ever become John and Joan!" Vulgar animal! As though he could ever be included in a thought of hers! It was profanation to dream of it. As though his person, and figure, and fortune, might ever help him to such an angel! But it suddenly occurred to me that in these three qualifications he was my superior. I could not but confess that here, at least, I was no match for him. I could not but remember, at the same time, that in these lies the chief attraction of men to women's eyes. And, after all, Elizabeth Wilfred, although an angel, was a woman also, and a very delightful one; the conviction of which, at the moment, aggravated my jealousy; for it seems to be an especial ordination of Providence that the delightful women shall fall to the lot of those who have no sense of their value; which is the more explicable, seeing that these are precisely the women who set the least value upon themselves.

Chiefly, Langley's surmise troubled me. Had he then discovered any indications of love in Miss Wilfred towards Sinclair? whom I now began to hate horribly. *Could* it be? I know not how it was, but handsome as the man undoubtedly was, he appeared to me the very last person in the world that such a woman as Elizabeth might be supposed to prefer. When my tumults subsided, I could not but admit that there was no other woman in the world but might have bestowed upon him her preference. Shall I confess—(to such abjectness is a lover betrayed; the recollection of it even now twinges me)—that his presumed indifference was a consolation to me?

The instant Sir Richard arrived in town, I made it my business to wait upon him. His project did not appear to have cooled with him—a too common case, as I well knew, with Sir Richard's projects—but he counselled caution,

moderation, and patience, three elements which he seldom brought to bear upon his own affairs. I took the liberty of remonstrating with him, urging that there could be no reason on earth why I should not at least be permitted the opportunity of ingratiating myself in the esteem of his daughter; on the contrary, I suggested as nicely and *gingerly* (to use his own words) as I could, that nothing could be more proper than that I should be allowed such opportunity. He said in reply, that my mother had, in some sense, a right to a voice in the matter, having, from her infancy, taken upon herself the duties of a mother to his child, which she had fulfilled to admiration. "Be easy," said he, "you do not know her. Leave Brett and me to manage her."

A month elapsed, during which I was, with his other creditors, an assiduous frequenter of Sir Richard's levee. He must have been one of the best natured men breathing, to have borne with me so well; for I was at least as troublesome to him, I suspect, as his other more legitimate plagues. A question he put to me one day, in an off-hand manner, was not calculated to lessen my pertinacious attendance upon him.

"Who is this Mr. Sinclair," he inquired, "whom I have seen so frequently with you, and who has lately been introduced to me? One of the many pretty fellows, I take it, who infest the town, the insides of whose heads are furnished now-a-days very much on the same principle as the outsides. Our ancestors wore their own hair—their descendants wear periwigs. Now, it seems to me your friend has no more brains under his periwig than will assist him with the women, who, like children, love those playthings best that make the most noise."

"He is what he appears," I observed, "a young gentleman of birth and fortune." Steele had said sufficient to alarm my suspicions. After a pause, I added, "You have met him, I presume, at Mrs. Brett's?"

"I have; and, to say the truth, cannot, for my part, discover his merit, of which I am told so much. I am one of those who never could be made to believe, for the life of

me, that wealth's a good substitute for virtue; nor could I confide the happiness of a woman to the keeping of one whose money was his sole or his chief recommendation."

"It is impossible to misunderstand you," I said in great agitation; "you mean that my mother desires and designs to sacrifice Miss Wilfred to Sinclair?"

"How do you know it would be a sacrifice?" cried Steele, smiling at my perturbation.

I thought he was trifling with me. "For God's sake, Sir Richard Steele, tell me at once. *Would* it be a sacrifice? or has my mother kindly undertaken to expound the wishes of the young lady herself? If so, all claim to the happiness you intended for me I resign."

"Resign yourself at present," cried Sir Richard, "to tranquillity. You have nothing to fear, I promise you. On the contrary, if the girl's word is to be taken, everything to hope. Patience. The garrison will at last capitulate. We have sat down before it."

"And by remembering the siege of Troy, I may make myself easy under a ten years' delay," said I: "but can it be possible that Miss Wilfred has honoured me so far as to express——"

"Miss Wilfred has said nothing—did I tell you she had?" replied Sir Richard. "I judge from her looks when I speak of you, and from her words when I do not."

But a trial awaited me which I had not foreseen, and which came upon me while I was yet indulging dreams of felicity and thoughts of vengeance. Calling upon Steele one morning, I found him pacing the room in some disorder. I saw, at a glance, that he had been expecting me, and surmised (for there is something impossible to be mistaken in a man's face upon these occasions) that I was the cause of his anger. I had never before seen him angry, and had often doubted whether he could be really so. There was as little of the venom as of the wisdom of the serpent in Steele. He was yoked with a lamb; a spark, and he was cold again. I had seen him so to others; but now, it seemed, he had unyoked the lamb and

——— carried anger as the flint bears fire,
Which being enforc'd, emits a hasty spark;

and has as many more sparks within it, and as much heat, as though it had not been enforced at all.

"Sit down, Mr. Savage. I have been wishing to see you, that I may tell you, from this day I wish to see you no more."

I had taken a seat, but instantly arose upon hearing this unlooked-for declaration. "My dear Sir Richard! surely, you cannot be serious; wherein have I offended you?"

"You have been holding me up to ridicule—nay, do not deny it—I am too well satisfied of the truth of the accusation I now bring against you. I was a fool," he added, "ever to have countenanced or trusted you. I might have seen—I *have* seen that you are no respecter of persons—that the vivacity of your imagination, the petulant sallies of your wit are exercised without much or any regard to the object they light upon. That a benefactor should escape—this was too much to expect."

"You are silent, Mr. Savage," he said at length, "and you have long maintained silence. I am glad of it. I rejoice that you, at least, retain a sense of shame. This will, I hope, be a lesson to you for the time to come. Not a word now. Leave me."

"A few words, and but a few," said I, approaching him. "Sir Richard Steele, if any man has inferred from speech of mine that I have not the utmost esteem and veneration for you, he is mistaken and a fool; if any man has told you that I have injured or calumniated you, he is a knave and a liar. On my soul—my hand upon my heart—a heart that must love you, whether you will or no—a hand that would second it to its last throb, did you require it—the man, whoever he be, is a lying scoundrel. Speak his name. My hand will not be slower than his tongue to chastise its base owner."

"You use hard names, and talk big words, young man," cried Sir Richard; "I did not speak of injury or calumny. I am not a man to be safely injured; and, thank Heaven!" this he said with a confirmed air, that upon another occasion would have caused me to smile—"thank Heaven! my character places me beyond the reach of calumny. I spoke

of ridicule—a more offensive, because it is a safer, bolt to the shooter."

I did not well know how to bear this word "safer" with the imputation it conveyed. My passions were at no period of my life easily governable, or to be restrained by a consideration of the rank or pretensions of an adversary. Accordingly I walked up to him, and said, with an air, I fear, too insolent, "It fits to hear the writer of The Tatler and The Spectator complain of ridicule—he whose wit never spared his best friends, and never lost him one. Let the world know, Sir Richard, that you claim an exemption from satire directed against yourself, and a swing of license in your own person to visit it upon anybody you please. And tell the friends you have not lost, that you deserved to lose them; and if they ask why, refer them to me."

No answer, but such as a very red face supplied, the import of which I mistook. The generosity of Steele, so nobly conspicuous upon most occasions, was not present to him now, or he had confessed the justice of my recrimination, shaken hands, and said no more. But no; he burst forth into a torrent of invective.

"It is your ingratitude—your base ingratitude, Savage, that I detest. I who have studied your interest—advanced your reputation—furnished you with money—designed your promotion——"

"Go on, Sir Richard," said I with a sneer; "let me know every item of the bill. It is a sad satisfaction to the butcher to number the legs of mutton he has supplied to the poor devil in distress, for which he will never be paid. But let me tell you, sir, there is something so terrible in a charge of ingratitude that I must not, and will not, bear it from you. It is at least as likely that you have expected too much, as that I have tendered too little. I despise—I scorn—from my soul, I scorn—the charge."

"You have a high spirit, I find, Mr. Savage," he exclaimed contemptuously; "a very high spirit."

"And why not—and why not?" I retorted quickly. "Wherefore shall not Richard Savage have a high spirit as well as Richard Steele? I have a proud spirit, too, sir,

which his can hardly be, who can throw in a man's face the obligations he lies under—*lies* under, indeed—prostration infinite! You might have recalled your friendship—you have squeezed and crushed it out of me. Ungrateful! you have made me feel, and not nobly—pardon me—how great a virtue gratitude may be made."

"Begone!" he exclaimed, in vehement rage; "leave my house. Those words have lost you my friendship for ever."

"I thought I had lost it when I came in, and was sorry; I go out, knowing that I have lost it, and am indifferent. One word before I go. I paid no court to you—it was you who sought me. I thought you meant that I should be your friend, and that I had made one. I was mistaken. You imagined you were cheapening a dog, to bark at your bidding, and to fawn and cringe at your call. *You* were mistaken. Both equally so."

"You have said enough for me, and more than sufficient for yourself," he replied. "Remember! all is at an end between us. My daughter—there you must, of course, feel——"

Not a thought had I bestowed upon Elizabeth during the foregoing scene. I am very glad of it. His injurious treatment of me deserved no such subdued or tame reception as my tenderness for her might have made me weak enough to give to it. But with the thought of her was coupled another, the memory of whom had no tendency to soften or to assuage. My eyes kindled as I threw a glance over my shoulder. "Of course, sir, I feel," said I, "that you would reclaim your daughter, and that all is at an end between us. You need not have told me that. I saw from the first" (a little allowable falsehood there) "the poor pretext to shake me off."

"What now! what now!" he exclaimed fiercely, starting from his chair, and advancing towards me. "What poor pretext—insolent vil——. I shall say something I would not, but under strong provocation, say. Begone."

I met him half-way, and thrust my face towards him. "My mother is at the bottom of this. Shame upon you,

Sir Richard Steele! Well may you fear ridicule, who lend yourself to such wretchedness. I thought you had found the way to repay yourself the value of the obligations I owe to you. I thank you. It is a great relief to me."

"By G——, Mr. Savage, this is too much. I will not endure it. To suppose that I would lend myself to any baseness! Upon my soul, sir!—but no matter. Your mother is no party to this. I have heard of your practices from many——"

"Who are practised upon, doubtless," I interrupted. "I doubt not your word—I suspect your penetration. You are played upon without knowing it. But I am gone."

My heart moved towards him as I turned away. He likewise, I think, was moved.

"You will trouble me no more, Mr. Savage?"

"No more, and yet—one moment. Sir Richard Steele, I am a young and an impetuous man. I can scarce bear deserved reproof—undeserved reproach I cannot—will not bear. I have spoken to you, you will tell the world, with insolence; if I have, I am sorry for it; but I will not recall it, for you also have said too much. You reminded me of your kindnesses. It is fit I should acknowledge them. I will, if you please, recapitulate them with nauseous exactness. No?"—for having shaken his raised hands, he pressed them against his ears—"then I make you my best bow—to you, who have been long weary of doing me services, to me, who am already weary of the mention of them—my best bow, because it is my last. God bless you, sir."

I turned upon my heel with an air of levity, how foreign to my real feelings, they alone can judge, who have parted in anger from a friend, with a conviction that that parting is to be for ever—a conviction that pride has raised, and will maintain, though the heart bleed for it—as mine has done, and is prepared to do again. Pride to the last, which is to the soul of a man what his bones are to his body.—As without these, a man were a mere mass of grovelling flesh, so without that his soul is as water, without a vessel to contain, or a channel to direct it—extensive,

perhaps, but superficial: brittle ice in adversity; in prosperity, feeble vapour.

It was some hours before I recovered my composure, or the appearance of it. Lost in a maze of conjecture, I vainly endeavoured to recollect any one occasion upon which I had spoken of my patron, which, fairly stated, could have supplied him with just ground of offence. I knew very well that men are as little disposed to bear the ridicule of themselves, as to forbear the ridicule of others; and I was aware that Sir Richard, who enjoyed a jest at the expense of another, by no means relished one at his own; a failing common to us all, and of which he partook in no larger degree than the generality of mankind. There must have been, therefore, some secret enemy at work, and him I resolved, if possible, to discover; with no view, however, of re-establishing my friendship with Steele, whose conduct towards me had, as I conceived, been such as no reparation, short of an apology I felt he could hardly make, would obliterate—but for my own satisfaction. My suspicions tended towards Sinclair, yet I had no reason to suspect him—no reason which an indifferent person would call by that name. But hate has eyes, and ears, and understanding, and wisdom—senses, faculties, functions of its own. It disdains the operation of reason—it arrives at its conclusion without it, and most frequently to a just conclusion. Let a traveller in the dark reason of the way he should go, ten to one he goes wrong; the dog follows its nose, and in due time is yelping for admittance at the door. And hate is the dog of human passions—a hell-hound, if you will; but of rare sagacity.

I had been wandering about, I knew not whither, when at length I found myself at Knightsbridge. I know not what feeling it was that induced me to seek out the public-house to which Steele had taken me a year before, and in which perhaps he had, upon more occasions than one, sought refuge. I turned into it; and in the very room we had occupied, took a sulky dinner. A bottle of wine was poured out to the memory of our friendship; and in it I steeped an earnest prayer for the health and happiness of the worthy knight who had flung me from him—in utter ignorance (I

believe I thought so) of the value of the gem he had cast away. This is the natural reaction. Perhaps a man never prizes himself so highly, or rather, is so disposed to set a high price upon himself, as when he has been depreciated by others.

In the evening I betook myself to my accustomed tavern, hoping that I should find Sinclair there. I was not disappointed. Langley and he were engaged in talk at the other end of the room. The former beckoned me to join them, which I did.

"Was ever mortal man so full of woe!" cried Langley, as I took my seat; "why, Savage, I never saw you look so melancholy, since I have had the privilege of peering into men's countenances, and conning their expression."

"And when was that privilege granted to you?" I said, listlessly.

"When the gentleman in the black gown handed me over the certificate of my marriage," he returned. "Come, let us know what ails you that wine will not touch."

I kept my eye immoveably fixed upon Sinclair, while I related what had taken place between Sir Richard Steele and myself. He underwent my scrutiny to admiration, not for a moment losing his self-possession.

"And what officious blockhead—I should more properly ask, what malicious knave—has been filling Sir Richard's ear with stories to your prejudice?" demanded Langley.

"That is what I am determined to find out."

Again I had Sinclair under my eye.

"Your question, Langley, pre-supposes your ignorance of the rascal. Can *you* help me to his name, Mr. Sinclair?"

"Indeed I cannot," replied he, coolly. "I have never heard you speak ill of Sir Richard, nor have I heard any man say that you have done so. Further, I have never heard anybody say a word against you."

"And yet you are intimate with Mrs. Brett," I remarked.

"She never mentions your name; a very discreet woman, Mrs. Brett."

"And you know Sir Richard Steele?"

The inference I intended was sufficiently palpable. His brow darkened, but was clear again in an instant.

"I have met him at Mrs. Brett's, and at Will's, with my friend the Colonel. But what is all this about?"

"What, indeed?" cried Langley.—"Hang the scoundrel! whoever he be. When you catch him, crop his ears—make them at least shorter than his tongue. This will blow over. Steele will not forgive himself till he has obtained your forgiveness. See; you have made Sinclair as dull as a droll at a nonplus."

Sinclair forced a laugh.

"I wish I could see Mr. Savage in better spirits," said he with a yawn.

"We must rally him, my boy!" exclaimed Langley, slapping the other on the shoulder; "and have we not abundant material to work upon? Megrim is a malady incident to lovers; and when a man thinks himself in danger of losing his mistress, take all he has, and welcome. 'I'm for the rope,' quoth he."

Sinclair brightened at this speech, and cast an encouraging leer at Langley.

My surprise gave place to my curiosity. What could Langley mean? Had he then heard of Steele's intentions? Had Gregory, the only man to whom I had confided my secret, betrayed his trust?

"I do not know what you are aiming at," I observed with seeming composure. "Our friend Gregory, the only lover of my acquaintance, has no reason, I believe, to wish his head in a hempen noose."

"Sly dog!" cried Langley. "I've heard of the boy who could not read from any book but his own; you, it seems, can only read from other people's. And do you think that we have never heard of Sir Richard Steele's Miss Wilfred, and of a certain engagement—eh?"

I was confounded first, and incensed second, and both in a minute. But I concealed my displeasure, although with some difficulty.

"And Mr. Gregory has told you this?" I demanded.

"As good as owned it, when he found that we knew full as much as himself. But Mrs. Brett told me, with a smile peculiar to her (I think, after all, she loves you, or will

love you), and I could not be easy till I took my nose to somebody else's ear; and somebody else whispered it to a third, and so the whole town has it. Sinclair has dropped his chin, and ponders sackcloth and a city wife."

"Not I," cried Sinclair with sudden animation; "so fair a prize is not so easily yielded!" There was a malignity in his face while he said this, which he was unable to disguise—from me. "But," he added, "I fear she is beyond the reach of either of us. Surely, Savage, you never imagined that Sir Richard was in earnest in his proposition?"

"And why should I not so imagine?" said I with a very civil smile. "Surely, you are not in earnest when you ask the question?"

"Indeed I am; but Lord! what is it to me? I hope you may not afflict yourself too deeply, that's all. I saw Langley's little fellow cry after the moon the other night; but they soon pacified him."

"But I am a great fellow, not a little one," I replied, my choler villanously rising, "and am content that the moon shall remain where she is. Perhaps," I added jeeringly, "perhaps you conceive yourself to be the Endymion who is to lure this Diana from her orb."

"Ha, ha! very good—perhaps I do conceive myself to be so, and perhaps I may yet prove myself to be so. Very good, that—was it not, Langley? Endymion! Diana! charming, I protest. Mythology and sentiment. No—no—my good friend;" and he shook his head.

"Hush!" cried Langley, who foresaw a storm. "Enough."

"My good friend," proceeded Sinclair, "Steele was laughing at you. I swear, he'll have you down in print. No man better loves a jest."

"Do you know, Mr. Sinclair," with a coldly confidential air, said I, "that I never permit any man to break a jest at my expense—not even Sir Richard Steele?"

"Well, and what of that?"

"And that if you are in the jesting vein, you had best seek some other, whose temper or forbearance is greater than my own."

"Quarrelsome, Mr. Savage?—very well, sir. One word, and we drop the subject. I was not jesting. I merely drew my own conclusion."

I tapped him on the shoulder. "A word with you, sir." He followed me.

"You draw your own conclusion, you say. Can you draw your sword? Can you fight?"

He was surprised, but not daunted by my vehemence. "I can—when I see occasion."

"I attend you then," said I, "or you me."

Langley thrust himself between us. "What childishness is this," he exclaimed. "Savage, you are mistaken, and wrong; indeed you are: and, Sinclair, we are equally so. We have carried the jest too far. Dick, you are too hasty—on my soul, you are."

"I believe, indeed, we went too far," said Sinclair frankly, coming towards me. "What the deuce! It were too much to expect to inherit one's father's fortune and wisdom too. Young fellows will be still young. I meant no offence. Savage, when I offer you my hand, I assure myself you will put no wrong construction upon my doing so. Friends, as before."

It had been uncouth and brutal to have declined a hand so offered; and yet never did a man dabble with another's fingers so ungracefully. We resumed our seats, and spent the evening together. Their spirits were high, and I forced mine into a seeming sympathy with them.

As I walked home, reflecting upon my brief quarrel with Sinclair, although I put no construction of cowardice upon the prompt offer of his hand, I could not help a doubt of his sincerity. An open rupture had been an obstruction of the game he was playing—or designed to play. I was confirmed in my suspicion by his after-bearing towards me, which was exceedingly cold and ceremonious. I believe, had our hearts bartered the sentiments we severally entertained of each other, we had got very nearly the same articles in exchange.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN WHICH SAVAGE, DURING AN INTERESTING INTERVIEW, OBTAINS A HALF-CONFESSION, WHICH ENABLES HIM TO BEAR UP AGAINST HIS MISFORTUNES. WITH OTHER MATTERS.

THANK God for every thing! but most earnestly do I render thanks to Him for this, that having been pleased to visit me with many afflictions, he has endued me with strength of mind to bear them. In my worst trials, I never bated a jot of heart or hope, or sought by that which some people call patience, others resignation, and I weakness, to spare my own shoulder when the wheel was to be got out of the slough. To bear afflictions is not to endure but to carry them; and no longer than is necessary, and no further than is needful. But to regret, or to lament the past—to wring the hands—to beat the bosom—oh! this is passing insanity. This is to hate a thing, and to add to it—to conjure the black devil and to give him a suit of sables; or, worst folly of all, to muffle the sun lest yesterday's cloud return to-morrow. Away, then, with Sir Richard Steele! I had lost his friendship by no fault of my own; let me say, rather, he had capriciously recalled it. Surely, his friendship could be of little value, who so easily lent, and so lightly reclaimed it. No—I could not think that; but, as was usual with me, and is with the world at large, on like occasions, I easily satisfied myself that I was altogether right, and that my patron was entirely wrong.

One circumstance, which I learned the next morning, assured me of this, while it banished the resentment from my breast, which otherwise I might have indulged—a brief anger in any case it must have been that I could have borne in my bosom against a man whom I so much loved, and whom, I think, no human being could hate. Mr. Addison was then lying dead. Steele must have known this calamity at our interview on the yesterday. The death of this great man—for great he was (let him who doubts it ask Mr. Pope, but for whom none had doubted)—I could well

believe, came like a stroke of thunder upon his friend, who reverenced him almost to idolatry. Sir Richard was not himself when he taxed me with ingratitude. He would in time, and in a short time, too, do me and himself justice.

After due consideration, I could by no means bring myself to the belief that Steele had been set against me by my mother. On the contrary, when I came to take a calm review of his whole conduct to me, undoubtedly incited, as it had been, by his knowledge of that woman's unnatural hatred towards me, I could not but feel, that any endeavours on her part to insinuate a dislike of me into his mind, must have operated in a directly reverse manner to that she would have intended. Neither, on the whole, could I justly suspect Sinclair, of whom Steele professed, and therefore held, no elevated opinion, and whose word, accordingly, would have weighed but little to my prejudice. The favour of so considerable a man as Sir Richard Steele got me, I doubt not, many enemies whom I had never injured, nay, perhaps, whom I had never seen, and one or more of these had poisoned his ear. It were useless, an attempt to detect them. I desisted in the attempt, more properly to speak, I declined it.

Steele, then, must have his will. Our acquaintance was at an end. But in one point, to me the most vital of all, my own will must be consulted and followed; which was, that Elizabeth Wilfred should fulfil her original destiny, and be consigned to no other arms than my own.

I made it my business to lie in wait for Lucas, whom I had not seen for some years, and who was now become a very old man. After several days' strict and unwearied watch, I lighted upon the ancient steward, and making myself known, led him away to an adjoining tavern.

"Eh! what! what!" said he, after I had with some difficulty explained myself—for Lucas was somewhat deaf. "Want me to give this letter to Miss Elizabeth? What's in the wind now—in the wind now?

My letter, I assured him, merely contained a request that Miss Wilfred would honour me with an interview of a few minutes.

"And where is that to be?" cried Lucas, repeating the question two or three times; "she goes nowhere without an eye upon her, you know whose eye; it sees—it sees. As for meeting her in our house—unless I drag you in at the top window, as the tailor did—ha! I remember that—I've a brisk memory, I warrant. Poor old Ludlow!—dead—under a flat stone—never to be looked upon again. I saw him put down—I did," and he looked upon me dimly, through the rheum in his eyes.

"If Miss Wilfred should consent to see me," said I, "surely, my old friend, we can evade Mrs. Brett's vigilance for a few minutes. You will manage that for me, I know. Meantime, you will deliver that letter?"

He turned it over several times.

"What do you want to see her for?" he inquired at length, winking his old eye, and taking off a glass of burnt claret. "Ho; ho! you mustn't steal away my lamb. What would my lady say to that—eh? Have you ever seen Miss Elizabeth since she's grown up into a tall woman? How she used to talk about the poor young gentleman, and how cruel it was of Mrs. Brett to treat you so. Speak loud—I can't catch your words else. I'm like the old woman of Reading, who made herself deaf by the sound of her own voice—chattered her own hearing away, the old fool; but people said it was wisely done. Charity begins at home, said they. Where have you seen her, I say?"

"At the house of her father, Sir Richard Steele," I replied.

"Jump, quoth the kitten," cried the old man. "I won't be your go-between—I won't—I won't,"—swallowing another glass, which I handed to him. "You've fallen in love with her—you have. As though I didn't know a black crow by its colour; I can see many more things than you guess. Why, I'm in love with her myself, and she's a sneaking kindness for me; if she hasn't, I'm not old and ugly. Oh, the devil! that's his case."

He brought me a reply on the following morning. The dear girl could not conceive what I could have to communicate to her. She had heard of my quarrel with her father, and deplored it; would willingly, if she knew how,

assist a reconciliation between us; was fearful I could not be admitted to my mother's house; and finally, consented to grant me five minutes, if Mr. Lucas thought it could be contrived with safety to me and to himself.

"And now, Lucas," said I, "I must rely upon you. Miss Wilfred consents to see me. You can refuse her nothing, I am sure of that."

"What say? what say?" cried he, "refuse her! Abraham Lucas can't do that, so I must be wicked enough to let you come into your mother's house. I hope it won't fall down upon our heads; especially," he added, with a chuckle, "as she'll be from home at the time. How came you to fall in love with my sweet one? Couldn't help it, I suppose—was to be—was to be. You won't run away with her, I hope, and leave my old gills to be cuffed, will you?"

I fear old Lucas must have stood his chance, could I have hoped to carry so charming a design into effect. As it was, I assured him he had nothing to fear from my indiscretion; and after some conversation, during which it was arranged that I was to be admitted on the following afternoon, he went his way, bearing a short letter containing my fervent and grateful thanks.

It had been delightful to me to listen to the old man's prattle concerning Elizabeth; and as he took his leave, methought, never, sure, were lovers furnished with so interesting a mediator. His occupation endeared him to me, not less that he who followed it had been the friend of Ludlow. There is sweetness, but more of sorrow, in the memory of that time! It restores the likeness of the departed—but the life, where is it?

At the appointed minute I was at the door, and was cautiously admitted by Lucas himself, who had been on the watch at one of the narrow windows at its side.

"Follow me to the back room," said he; "you mustn't stay long. My lady may be upon us before we're aware. Miss Elizabeth," he added, throwing open the door, "here is the young gentleman. Mind," in a whisper to me, as he retired, "no kissing, or I shall be sure to hear it. I've got my Sunday ears on to-day."

I entered, and approached Miss Wilfred with great respect. She extended her hand frankly, but in a slight confusion. Her hand trembled as she withdrew it, which was on the instant, and gently. I wished I had detained it.

"Madam," said I, when we were seated, and after some hesitation, "the kind note you were so generous as to return, in reply to mine, informs me of your knowledge of the unhappy misunderstanding between Sir Richard Steele and myself."

"I was extremely sorry to hear my father say he had reason to be offended with you," she replied; "but I cannot believe that his anger will be of long continuance. He did not speak of its cause."

"Calumnies, madam, with which his ear has been abused by certain enemies of mine, of whom I have many."

"I hope you are mistaken there, as I am sure my father is in his judgment of you. So young a gentleman, surely, can have made but few enemies."

"Pardon me, Miss Wilfred," said I, smiling; "foes are like fools, one is the cause of many. I believe you know that I have *one* enemy in the world."

She sighed, and cast her eyes on the ground.

"Of her it is not proper that I should speak," I resumed; "the best I can hope from her is her indifference. But in your father I have lost a friend, and indeed, madam, were I as rich in friends as I am poor, I could not afford so heavy a loss."

"I am greatly concerned," she answered, and she looked so; "and if I knew how I could with propriety——" she hesitated.

"I will not tax your goodness, dear Miss Wilfred," said I, and *I* hesitated. I was about coming to a point upon which I had made up my mind to be satisfied, but which, now the moment was come, I dreaded to touch upon. But it must be, nevertheless. So fair an opportunity I could hardly expect to be accorded to me again.

"If I deplore, as upon my honour I do," I resumed, "the error Sir Richard Steele lies under, and which has induced him to alter his opinion of me, because I lose thereby the

advantage of his counsel and his conversation, you may conceive, madam, how much more I lament that error, when I tell you, that it has not only caused him to withdraw the friend, but to assume the enemy. Your father, madam"—I trembled a little here, and looked calf-like, I dare say—"your father, madam, designed me to be the happiest man breathing, and now has it in contemplation to render me the most miserable." I raised my eyes respectfully to her face.

How beautifully silly she appeared at that moment!

"I do not understand"—faltering—"what you mean, Mr. Savage."

"Did, then, Miss Wilfred never hear of a"—confound me if I could lay my tongue upon the right word—"of a certain gracious intention, on his part, to make me more supremely blest than"—no—I could not utter play-jargon to her—"to make me happy, dear madam—most happy?"

Her blushes told me that my meaning was understood.

"My father is a very strange man, Mr. Savage, and——"

"And a very good and generous one," said I quickly; "nor is his daughter less good and generous. Oh, madam! if I could hope——"

"I must obey my father in all things," she replied, with some demureness.

"And would Miss Wilfred have obeyed her father, had he commanded her to make good his intention, for she alone could have fulfilled it? Forgive me; I fear I am too presumptuous."

There was something at fault with the bosom of her gown. She replied, bashfully, after a short pause—

"I must not answer your question. My duty to my father forbids it. I am fearful I have acted very indiscreetly in consenting to see you without his knowledge, as it must be without his approbation, should he learn that I have done so. I will, however, repeat, that I am grieved that Sir Richard should have conceived a false opinion of you, and that I am sure it is a false one. Oh! Mr. Savage! endeavour to regain his esteem, and to secure it. Your merit entitles you to the friendship of so excellent a man as my father."

She feared she had said too much, and paused, averting her face in confusion. It was this, and not her words which, however, conveyed some hope, that filled me with transport.

"A time will come, madam," I said, "when Sir Richard Steele may not consider me as one altogether unworthy of his friendship, and when he may derive some pleasure from the reflection that he once lent me his countenance. It is time that I should begin to justify the opinion he has been pleased to entertain of my abilities. My vanity, perhaps, induces me to believe that I may succeed in doing so; your good wishes towards that end will enable me to bear up against the difficulties which I foresee will beset me."

"Indeed you have them, then," she replied with animation. "I am sure," she added, looking down, "I ought to feel an interest in the happiness of Mr. Savage."

"I can forgive Mrs. Brett her cruelty, since it is the occasion of your goodness towards me," I returned. "It will, indeed, sustain me if—one question, I beseech you. I know I am too bold, but—there is a gentleman who calls himself my friend. He may be so. He is also acquainted with my mother; her friend, too, I believe. His name is Sinclair."

She started, and flushed crimson; but presently became very pale.

"Mr. Sinclair is the friend of Mrs. Brett;" she paused, and then added, "he is no friend of mine. I have my troubles as well as yourself, sir. Indeed, I am very unhappy."

At this moment Lucas burst into the room. I could have run the old booby through for his ill-timed interruption. Miss Wilfred arose in great alarm.

"Here she comes—here she is—here she will be in a minute," cried Lucas. "I know the creak of her carriage-wheels a mile off. Miss Elizabeth, run upstairs. Savage, creep under that table."

"Pray, madam," said I, "be not alarmed. Let me hand you to the door. Lucas, I am waiting to see the Colonel."

"The coach has passed—passed the door. A false alarm. Hurrah!" and the old fellow threw up his leg.

"But oh! I thought my lady would give me a shaking to-day, and so she has. Get you gone—get you gone. We'll contrive better another time."

"But five minutes longer," said I, "and I am gone. Leave the room, Lucas;" but he kept his place sturdily.

"The old gentleman is frightened," said Elizabeth. "We must part now." She approached me, and placed her hand in mine with a captivating ingenuousness. "Mr. Savage," she said, "it were affectation—and of affectation, I hope, I shall never be guilty—were I to pretend ignorance of the purport of your question, or of your motive for wishing to see me. Rest assured that the welfare of Mr. Savage will cause no one greater pleasure than it will bring to Elizabeth Wilfred. And why should I not add, if it will be a satisfaction to you to hear it from me, that Mr. Sinclair can never be more to me than he is at this moment. I will never be the wife of Mr. Sinclair."

I raised her hand to my lips in a rapture, and bestowed I know not how many kisses upon it, much to the seeming displeasure of Mr. Lucas, who made several grotesque signs to me, which I could by no means understand.

She curtsied lowly to me as I retired, with a look of regard—I can call it no more—which shone in my heart for many a weary day afterwards.

I tore myself away, and betook myself to Myte's, not to impart the cause of my happiness, but to make it apparent that my recent reverse of fortune, which had doubtless been communicated by Langley, had in no wise depressed my spirits, or disturbed my equanimity. Here, if any thing could have added to my perfect felicity, it would have been the sight of my friend Gregory, evidently established in the good graces of the whole family.

During the evening, Myte drew me aside, and confirmed the assurance to which I had come. "Why, Ricardo," said he, "you have been all yourself to-night—gay as a gad-fly, which, considering what my son, Langley, has told me, is passing strange. I hope you are not acting a part—all palace without, all prison within. As for me, I've sawed off my high heels, and brought myself down to the ordinary

level of human kind. Let no man walk with his chin too much raised in the air, lest he nose humiliation; so saith Daniel Myte, who is sometimes a very Daniel."

"And what recent occurrence has begotten this aphorism?" said I, laughing; "or is it a crutch in time, lest you should fall?"

"A crutch," he replied, "with which I mean to walk to the end of my days. I've abandoned all thought of Lothario—for that's the name I have given to Sinclair, so named after Nic Rowe's rantipole rascal. I've done with him. He's a sour grape. Why, Wildgoose tells me he has fallen in love with Sir Richard's daughter—the ward of Semiramis—a tall maypole thing, not to be compared with my little bundle of myrrh yonder."

I could have pulled the small fellow's ear for that, and whispered a secret into it afterwards. "A very elegant young lady, I have heard," I said.

"So be it," he returned. "Vandal devolves to Mad Tom. My word is passed. They are one, when old Greg and I have laid our heads together over the desk some three or four more times. He eats my beef and mutton, and drinks my wine here weekly, and says he already loves Vandal as his own child—the only lie I have as yet taken him in. Tom expects to get a higher post at the receipt of custom, and when old Greg dies will have money enough to bury him, and a little over to support his own life."

"You have come at last, then, to a proper sense of my friend's worth," said I. "Miss Martha, I'll swear, will never have cause to regret the preference she has bestowed upon Mr. Gregory."

"I was going to say a narrow thing, but I won't," said Myte; "I should have hurt your very fine feelings. You've less faith in the worth of money than I have. Let me tell you, Ricardo, virtue without money is an old hag—a very good old hag in her way possibly; but she's pelted for a witch; and vice that has it is a wicked baggage, perhaps, but she sits in the high places, and is bowed to."

"She is—by the base and vile," I replied gravely, for this was a sore subject with me.

"Then cleave to the old hag," said he, "who wants her? Decency beats her out of the field by mere dint of dress; and if she does take a dram sometimes, nobody sees her. If you tarry till men bow to Virtue for her own sake, you'll wait till Time has left off work, and begins to bind his scythe with a hayband."

Gregory and I went away together. As we walked, I made him acquainted with all that had passed at my interview with Elizabeth. The circumstances of his own condition caused him to sympathise with my feelings more warmly than otherwise he could have done, and to announce confidently a successful termination to my suit, now, as he conceived, fairly begun.

"But," said he, "have you no fear of Sinclair? Langley tells me he is a vast favourite of your mother, and that he is taking great pains to ingratiate himself with Sir Richard Steele. He is clearly enamoured of Miss Wilfred, and we all know what love can do. Love that could transform the brutish Cymon into a hero, may metamorphose Sinclair into a sober gentleman. What, should he make proposals of marriage?"

"He will be rejected," said I, "as I told you."

"Come," he returned, "let us look upon the matter fairly. He is a man of family and fortune—handsome, accomplished. His character is tolerable. He would have your mother's influence in his favour; and you cannot suppose that Steele would be insensible to the advantages of the match."

"All this, notwithstanding," I replied, "if he has said in his heart I will have none other than Elizabeth Wilfred, he writes bachelor to the end of his days. I tell you, Gregory, she is mine."

"You will be offended, Savage, if I hint to you, that it will be as well you should be upon your guard."

"I take your warning in very good part. Langley has infected you with his doctrine. Handsome fellows with large fortunes can't always carry the day. There is something so palpable in these advantages, that creatures of soul turn from them."

"Hang him!" said he, "I don't like him; yet one cannot but see how attractive he is to the women. I began to be jealous of him, I confess, and thought, at one time, Myte less disinterested than I have found him. Didn't you observe a particularity in his attention to Martha some months since? It ceased after he had seen Miss Wilfred."

"After he has heard Miss Wilfred, any particularity of attention he may bestow upon her will also cease. Enough of him. Have you seen Merchant lately?"

"Yes, with Sinclair. He is his constant companion. Pity that a man like Merchant should be degraded to the condition of a dependent, or rather, should voluntarily debase himself by consenting to be one."

"You surprise me," said I. "Sinclair has been kind to him, we know; but surely, you do not mean that he is, therefore, a dependent?"

"I mean that he has become a whetstone for the whittle of Sinclair's humour—his butt. He took me apart the other evening, and said, with a blush—there is hope of him, therefore—'You think this sorry work, Gregory; and so it is; but, behold!' chinking a purse, 'when the barber pays, blunt razors may be borne. Which appears to you the more conspicuous in these dreary bouts, my complaisance or Sinclair's dulness?' 'They are about equal,' I answered. 'There is no attrition, my child,' he replied; 'while I continue impassive, he will never improve. Meanwhile, his gold passes currently. He is a tree more beautiful in the fruit than in the foliage.' Here we see, Savage, the predominance of wealth."

"It will always be so, while mankind consent to acknowledge it. I wonder you should expect that Merchant should be more virtuous than his neighbours. He professes to live upon the world, and a goose is a god-send to him. Let him alone. He fulfils his fate. It is as essential a part of wisdom to know what to avoid, as to learn what to seek. He is a warning, not a pattern. Besides, how moral he is making us. Is not that a merit in him?"

Gregory was, as I have before said, a very worthy fellow; but he had never known want, and knew not how hard a

task-mistress is necessity. Let smug prosperity be dumb when misfortune comes to judgment. Oh! beautiful indeed is virtue! But *how* beautiful let him avouch—to quote my own words—

> Who amid woe, untempted by relief,
> Has stoop'd reluctant to low arts of shame,
> Which then, even then, he scorn'd and blush'd to name.

Within a month I was once more in a situation to revolve all the arguments that might be urged in favour of Merchant, and to feel less tolerant of such high-flown morality as sometimes proceeded from the mouth of Gregory. The cessation of Sir Richard's liberal allowance to me left me no alternative but to get my living by the labour of my hands, or to starve. In this emergency I renewed the acquaintance of Mr. Wilks. This constant friend deplored my misfortunes without alarming my self-esteem, and relieved my distresses without wounding my pride. He gave me small hope of any immediate restoration to the friendship of Steele; who, it seemed, spoke of me with a degree of acrimony which at once surprised and grieved him. Meanwhile, he urged me strongly to turn my thoughts once more to the stage. The slender success my earlier efforts had met with, he was pleased to attribute rather to a want of knowledge of scenic effects, than to a deficiency of dramatic power. To attain this indispensable preliminary knowledge, he thought it requisite that I should make the acquaintance of the players, whose experience might greatly assist me—(for players talk little else but of plays)—and be constantly behind the scenes, that I might observe the resources of the stage, and perceive, unmoved, and at leisure, how they were brought to bear upon an audience.

I availed myself of the hint, and in a short time—for my address was pleasing, and my manners were easy—I obtained the confidence of all the principal performers, and the good will, I believe, of everybody in the theatre. My days were chiefly spent in conversing with players, and my nights in witnessing their performances; till at length, from seeing plays, I began to feel a wish to write them, and from the study of actors, became ambitious of being a player.

My necessities gradually increased—necessities which the kindness of Wilks would have averted altogether, as it frequently mitigated them; so frequently, indeed, that I was ashamed to avow my real state, and I was now sunk in deplorable distress. I studiously avoided all my former friends, for my appearance was not such as would have recommended my society to them; and was compelled to live, from day to day, by chance, or upon expedients. I had youth, however, and spirit, and, best of all! the love of Elizabeth Wilfred to sustain me. Why, then, have I called my distress deplorable? Because, fool-like, I forgot myself, and must needs, for a moment, talk the world's language. When I had no mortal dinner, I dined ambrosially with her, and in dreams of her tender presence enjoyed Elysian repose on a bulk or in the shambles of the market. Call it cant, if you will—bravado—coxcombry—let those feelings be restored, and restore me those days—those nights—or worse—for worse have I endured, and worse than the last did no man ever endure—recall them, O Time! if thou couldst, and with them renew this heart—making it a heaven, kissing heaven—a heaven because it *did* hope—and I am thine, once more to do thy harshest upon!

One day I was, as was my custom, lingering behind the scenes, when Brett came up and accosted me. I had not spoken to the Colonel for some time, and he had not chosen to disturb my reserve. Now, however, he approached me familiarly, extending his hand.

"I fear, Mr. Savage," he said, "the world has not treated you too well of late."

"I have no recent cause to complain of the world," I replied; "it never treated me too well. The world, Colonel," I added, with feigned gaiety, "is not so bad but it might be worse, nor so good but it might be better. It is a tolerable round world, after all. If a man can keep his footing while it revolves, it is pretty well; if he is shaken off, not much worse. You see, I am a philosopher."

"You look like one—pardon me, I do not mean to offend you. Can your philosophy help you to discover a better man out of Bedlam than Wilks?"

"It cannot. But why out of Bedlam?"

"Because there are many there, child, who have had their good deeds flung at their heads, and the same knocked out their brains. Harkee—a word with you," and he took my arm, and walked with me on to the stage.

"Wilks," said he, "has been urgently pressing with your mother to do something for you. No man living—*I* am out of the question," and he shrugged his shoulders—"has so much influence with her as my friend Wilks. Steele is not sufficiently grave or earnest to succeed with her, and you have offended him. I am sorry for it."

"I have ceased to be so," I returned; "but I am sorry that Mr. Wilks should have undertaken so ungrateful an office. I wish you to believe that he has not done so at my solicitation."

"I can readily believe that," he replied, laughing; then, between his teeth, "Child of Anne Mason art thou, O Savage!" He paused for a moment, and continued hastily: "She has sent you fifty pounds, and designs to let you have two hundred more. She has *promised* two hundred more."

"I will not accept a farthing," said I, when my surprise had abated so far that I could speak.

"Odso!" he exclaimed, "it is a strange fish that loves not water. I will take it back, and bid her buy a skreen with it, lest she should catch cold in heart, after opening it so freely. Come, come; this is worse than folly. Take it from me, then, as coming from me."

"If I were sure it did come from you, Colonel, I would do so; and now, I think, I may be certain of it. Impossible that my mother could design me a service!"

"Ah well! as Frank Burridge used to say," he returned, "No more of it."

Glad, I am almost ashamed to say, to strain my belief in favour of Brett, I accepted the money. "I am your debtor for it," said I.

"Pish—we are going for a time to Bath."

"Miss Wilfred, too?" I inquired in trembling haste.

Brett placed his hands upon my shoulders, and looked

into my face. There was an expression in his I had never seen before. "Poor fellow!" said he, "the arrow has struck you, has it? Draw it forth; break it in two—away with it. She is very well, and unmarried, and she goes with us. Let me do you one service in my life; I will carry a message from you."

"My respectful regards are all I would send, colonel."

"They shall not be lost by the way," he returned, pressing my hands warmly; "should you hear of my death shortly, Richard, give me your good wishes to the other world, as I offer you mine in this."

"Why, what is the matter?" I inquired.

"The liver. This comes of dear Addison's company; gone before us, alas! and Steele's, and the rest, who are to follow. The doctor tells me I am not immortal, and that I have lived as though I thought I was. I wish my tombstone could say a good word of me without lying; but who can live up to his epitaph? Farewell!"

He went from me a few paces, and returned. "When I am gone, your mother may treat you more kindly. Do not spurn her kindness, for my sake and for your own. Grief softens the heart, and humbles it. Catch it, ere it fall, and press it to your own. The love of the human creature will gush forth, and all will be as it should be. A sermon from Colonel Brett!" he added, rallying, "Well; I have a gift more than I thought for."

Colonel Brett, farewell! I record your words. That they were *but* words—it is not my fault!

CHAPTER XX.

ANOTHER INSTANCE OF BENEVOLENCE EXERTED IN FAVOUR OF OUR AUTHOR. HIS APPEARANCE ON THE STAGE, WITH A GLANCE AT TWO OR THREE OF HIS AUDIENCE. WITH A SURPRISING COMMUNICATION, WHICH PRECIPITATES HIM UPON A DANGEROUS ADVENTURE.

It may be asked by the curious inquirer, whether, having suddenly become possessed of a sum of money amply sufficient to support me till I could carry my design into

effect of writing a play, and bringing it upon the stage, I did not apply it to that purpose. To say the truth, I did not. Money that comes deviously into a man's pocket, goes crookedly out of it. I did not deal with a slack hand in its expenditure; and within two months, save that I was more genteelly clad, I found myself in as bad a plight as before. I cannot help the head-shaking objurgation that this acknowledgment will bring upon me; let me, however, submit that I am entitled to some credit for making it so candidly.

As though at once to justify my past extravagance and to inculcate it for the time to come, fortune at this crisis stept forward, and placed another prize in my hands. I had recommended myself to the esteem of Mrs. Oldfield, the celebrated actress—(the "poor Narcissa" of Mr. Pope) a lady of whom I can never speak without gratitude and affection. I was young and sprightly (for I never permitted external circumstances to depress me) and had a flow of talk at command that rendered me acceptable to women who, I have observed, however they may exercise their tongues amongst themselves—never arrogate more than their fair share of the conversation in the company of men of sense and spirit. If I lay claim to any colloquial merit, it will be on the ground of its ease and unaffectedness. Abhorring the inveterate chatter of the pretty fellows of the cane and snuff-box, my conversation was simple, lively, genuine. There was no set turn of phrase, no idiom-shunning—no darling topic. If I be accused of vanity, I can only urge that I have been told this a hundred times.

My conversation, then, perhaps my story, which was well known to her, attracted the regard of Mrs. Oldfield, and at length interested herself strongly in my welfare.

"Mr. Savage," she said to me one day, "what a pity it is that a gentleman of your abilities should be wafted about the world without any settled place or purpose. Permit me to speak frankly to you, and do, I beg of you, be candid with me. Can I serve you?"

I dropt my eyelids, but answered nothing. What I thought I shall not reveal. Are not all young men coxcombs?

"Fortune has been more kind to me than I fear I have deserved," she continued; "but I wish to ingratiate myself with Mrs. Oldfield. Will not fifty pounds a-year in some measure enable you to pursue your studies without molestation? You must try whether it will, or no. Nay," raising her finger, "no long speech, which I perceive you are meditating, or I shall run away and leave you. Why, bless the man, I vow he thinks this a very great matter. You do not know how selfish a woman I am, and that I am purchasing a luxury at your expense."

I had not meditated a long speech; my heart, which was now running over at my eyes, was too full for that; but I raised her hand, and pressed it to my lips. Hang me, if I could bring out a word of thanks—of gratitude. It was not needed. She understood me, pressing my hand ere I relinquished hers.

"You will understand me, Mr. Savage," she said, "when I hint, there is a reason why I must not see you at my own house, or at any other place than this. I desire your *friendship*," she added, with emphasis. "Not a word more of this as long as we live, I entreat you. Send to me tomorrow morning."

She took her leave of me with a grace that I have never seen surpassed except by one, who may blush, perhaps, but will not be offended that I include her in the same paragraph with Mrs. Oldfield. The faults of my benefactress were such as the world cannot, or will not, readily pardon. Of these it would ill become me to speak. Beauty she had—(at five-and-forty she was beautiful)—inimitable elegance, surpassing grace were hers—a joyousness of air—a harmony of carriage—a loveableness (to coin a word) of mien upon the stage almost irresistible. The young fellows adored her, and the old ones blinked, and thought of their sons' morals, and of their own. "It is nought, it is nought," they said, but the old fellows were mistaken. Her beneficence might have shamed some whose good deeds are loudly vaunted by themselves, or others.

It was not until I had well nigh exhausted the first year's allowance made to me by this lady, and paid in advance,

that I began seriously to consider my situation. My friends took to wondering, as well they might, that I made no effort to fulfil expectations which I had not refrained from openly indulging, of my own capacity; and some of them, more plain or less delicate than the rest, made no scruple of hinting, that to talk about doing great things is much easier than to perform them, and that if words were deeds I had done enough, and might thenceforward hold my peace.

"After long choosing and beginning late," as Milton said concerning a very different work, I fixed upon the story of the unfortunate Sir Thomas Overbury, as one admirably adapted to a dramatic purpose. That I have not changed my opinion a second play, now completed, which I have by me, and which is one day to see the light, will testify.

Unhappily for the due prosecution of this arduous task, ("happily, had it taught you wisdom," I think I hear some moral man remark) I was again overtaken by distress, before I had effected much progress in it. Notwithstanding, slowly to be sure, but doggedly did I grovel on with it, forming my speeches in the open air, and committing them to paper casually obtained, with a pen borrowed for the nonce from some small shopkeeper, who with a smile, half pity, half contempt of a poor wit at his wits' ends for a dinner, thanked God, I dare say, that nature had given him no more brains than he could carry in his head, without making the world as wise as himself.

Cold about me—hunger within me, a beast that loves not the cold—the desolate streets before me; the journeying moon overhead, posting onward, heedless of her solitary minion—fair weather and foul, (the fair is foul to the houseless, and the famishing, and the foul—what *that* is—let the stark wretch, his face skyward, his soul within the skies—(at home at last!)—let him, dead though he be, and still, cry to the heart even of Mr. Overseer, telling him what *that* is)—I bore it all unflinchingly. Turn out, fat man of substance, and bob for wisdom and charity on the banks of Southwark. They are best taken at night, when God only sees you—when the east wind is abroad, making you shake like the sinner who was hanged for breaking

into your dwelling house. "The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold," sayest thou? It is so. But tell me whether, on the fourth night, when thou liest stretched on thy blessed bed, thy heart is not warmer than it was wont to be—whether thou dost not pray prayers of long omission—whether thou wilt not, in the morning, bethink thee of the poor, and relieve them out of thy abundance? Sayest thou, no? God help thee!

My play was at length completed; and, placed at temporary ease by Wilks, to whom, in the hope of repaying some part, at least, of his kindness out of the profits of my tragedy, I made my wants partially known, I was enabled to revise and correct it, and to prepare it for the stage. I had written the part of Sir Thomas Overbury for Booth, beyond question the greatest actor of his day. The elder playgoers, indeed, denied his claim to be considered as a worthy successor to Betterton; but Betterton had in his time suffered by a like retrospective comparison with Hart, and it was generally conceded that Booth was greatly superior to Verbruggen and Powel, the latter of whom, but for his unhappy infirmity, drunkenness, would have played Betterton, in his latter days, off the stage. That the abilities of Booth as an actor were of a very high class, no one who ever saw him can dispute. "The blind might have seen him in his voice, and the deaf have heard him in his face," was said of him, and finely said, by my friend Aaron Hill. Can a greater eulogium be passed upon an actor? Not easily. And yet he deserved it.

Wilks was eager to serve me; but others were first to be served—not so many (I say it without vanity) by reason of their merit, as by virtue of their influence—influence which will beat merit out of the field any day, and every day, to the end of time.

The season was now drawing to its close. One by one the principal actors betook themselves into the country, leaving the theatre to the less favoured performers to glean the harvest they had reaped. There seemed no help for it, but I must put on patience, and let my play stand over to another year. But Wilks, ever studious of my ad-

vantage, recommended me to place my play in the hands of Cibber before he also left town, saying that, even now, something might be made of it to satisfy my moderate expectations. (He was wrong; my expectations were by no means moderate.)

"What do you say now?" he exclaimed, gaily. "Hill has given you an excellent prologue and epilogue. Your play is much better than in fairness or reason could have been expected from so young a man, and the town is not very fastidious at Midsummer. You have often spoken of trying your fortune as an actor. Imp your wings in Sir Thomas, and let Cibber's boy, Theophilus, take Somerset. Mills—careful Mills, the safest actor on a dead level that ever made villanous faces, shall be your Northampton. Your story is so universally known, that your appearance as a player will inevitably draw a good house."

"I could wish that my merit, rather than my misfortunes, should contribute to my success," I remarked.

"Go, go; don't be foolish," he replied; "the greater the audience, the more to perceive your merit. Who cares what brings 'em, so they be brought?"

Anxious as I undoubtedly was, seeing that I could not secure Booth, to make my first appearance as an actor in a character I myself had written, and which, accordingly, I might naturally be supposed to understand thoroughly, I felt, nevertheless, a great repugnance against submitting, or rather committing my play to the talons of Cibber.

I was obliged to submit with as good a grace as I could muster, to the interpolations of this busy meddler who, to say the truth, was not deficient in good nature, and who really conceived he was doing me a service. The young Theophilus was set down for Somerset, and flattered himself that an opportunity would be at length afforded him of showing the world in general, and the "old put," his father, in particular, that he was destined to achieve great things on the stage.

The night was at length fixed—the play was advertised; the first appearance of the author himself, in the principal character, stood conspicuous in the bills, and full of hope

and expectation—confident of myself, at least, if not of my play, I awaited the issue.

That I had formed a preposterously absurd estimate of my abilities as an actor, with great confusion of countenance I am compelled to admit. Some decried my face, others abused my figure; others, again, objected to my voice; these, severally and collectively, served as texts for a discourse on my incapacity. These were not disqualifications. My face was not amiss; my figure was tolerable; and my voice, if not strong, was flexible and melodious. I may as well tell the truth at once—I had no genius for acting. How was it that Betterton, at three score years and ten, wrinkled, gouty, and scant of breath, could present Hamlet to the wonder and delight equally of exacting age and of apprehensive youth?—how, but by the force of genius, which plumped up his cheeks, inflated his lungs, and put the spirit of thirty into his legs? There is no art, which is to convey genius, that imposes so perfect a study of it, as the art of acting. A want of rhythm may be forgiven in the poet, and a deficiency of drawing in the painter; but laughter is the lot of the inartificial player. That I escaped the horror of positive wide-mouthed cachinnation is to be set down to the fact of my having, to a certain extent, cultivated the art. How I grin, at this moment, to think that I should ever have obtruded my cub-like inefficiency upon the stage!

But, an unpractised actor, performing for the first time, on the first night of his own play—as though I had not sufficient to disconcert me—there was my devilish mother in a side-box, gay and giggling, finger-pointing, and expounding into the ear of the smirking and self-satisfied Sinclair, who sat between her and the woman whom, of all the world, I had long panted to behold, and yet whose presence upon so trying an occasion to myself, even more than the exhibition of Mrs. Brett, fluttered my spirits, and alarmed my fortitude. I was well nigh fainting when my eyes first lighted upon three persons, towards whom my heart owned such different feelings; and I was fain, when I left the stage, to recruit myself with a copious draught

of brandy. Said the shocking woman—the mother—when having re-entered the stage, I took my station beneath her box, that I might escape her hateful gaze: "Our young Sir Thomas appears to have taken his poison early in the play, does he not?"

"Grim, madam—very grim," returned the civil coxcomb. "We know not what we have to expect. He foreshows his fate."

"And will deserve it, I dare say, sir, before he has done. His crime is dulness, and should be punished with death."

"Nay, dear Madam," said Sinclair, whispering something.

"That's true," she said, with a jeering laugh; "not at their hands, certainly. They partake his crime."

But what said the sweet and gentle creature whose face ever beamed with mercy, and breathed it? Not a syllable came from her lips the whole evening, although, as I saw, Sinclair directed many remarks to her. The agreeable rattle was baffled, and looked not so agreeable (I enjoyed his mortification from behind) when the curtain fell amid tumultuous applause, which, to say the truth, did more honour to the audience than to the play or the performers.

Sir Thomas Overbury was played three nights, and then withdrawn, and to my no small satisfaction; for by this time I had become thoroughly disgusted with my be-Cibbered play, and with my own qualifications as an actor. I saw not Mrs. Brett, or her Sinclair, or my pale and trembling Elizabeth on the second or on the last night. This was a relief to me that I cannot express. Had my mother known how great a relief it was, she, at least, had revisited me.

It must not, however, be inferred that my tragedy was not tolerably successful, because it was only performed three nights. It was brought out in the summer, when the town is thin, and when no play, or set of players, could draw full houses. It was worth the while of the actors, who took part in my play, to co-operate with me, for we played for our common benefit, and the receipts were larger than we counted upon.

Of the tragedy itself, time has enabled me to think with justice, and now entitles me to speak openly, without the

imputation of vanity. Such portion of it as I could call my own was by no means without merit; nay, when my youth and the difficulties under which it was composed are borne in mind, it displayed no common (I will not call it genius, but) aptness for dramatic composition. Such, also, was the opinion of many gentlemen, eminent in literature, and celebrated for their exactness of judgment—perhaps, I may add, who deserved celebrity on the score of their tenderness and humanity. Under their advice, I gave it to the public, Cibber's heaviness and all; which, indeed, might have conduced to its success upon the stage—for an audience loves novelty less than repetition; and Cibber's rumble filled the general ear, and was familiar to it. The tragedy, its performance and publication, served my purpose, putting more than a hundred pounds into my pocket—a sum much larger than had ever before found its way there, and which, until I took it fairly in hand, I looked upon as almost inexhaustible.

The critics, to be sure, were rather hard upon me; but about these whimsical gentry and their mysterious ways, it is not well or wise that a man, who has brains in his head, should care a rush. Criticism, which sometimes endeavours to make dulness more opaque, and genius more radiant, too frequently strives to brighten the dull, and to obscure the splendid. But dulness is not so well known to be dull when it is pelted with mud; and a large candle may be seen without lighting a little one to see it by. And when a man rails at genius, he takes pains to be a fool; and when he exalts dulness, he is a fool for his pains. What shall rescue criticism from contempt, when we have seen the greatest critic of his time most intolerant of the greatest poet of his age? Pope lives, and will live for ever. Dennis is dead, and will for ever remain so.

Praised, caressed, and flattered on all hands, but such as dabble in the ink-stand—money in the pocket—lightness in the bosom—vanity in the head—I showed myself once again in the taverns and chocolate-houses, and paid off some of the old scores of insult that had been lent me to help my decadency when I lost the esteem of Steele.

But there were many with whom I renewed a friendship which I had been the first to suspend; for I hold (although necessity has often compelled me to swerve from my doctrine) that when a man becomes low in the world, the best thing he can do, both for his own sake and for that of his friends, is to keep aloof from them; and this, not because he so much doubts the stability of their friendship, as that he values it too highly to hazard its dissolution. Friendship is a horse that carries double; but the riders should be of a mind. It cannot walk and gallop at the same time.

I found some difficulty in satisfying Gregory that I had not neglected him, and Langley rallied me unmercifully upon my pride. But Steele had taught me to place entire confidence in no man, and I needed not experience to teach me that Langley and myself were best apart when we could not meet upon an equal footing. Between Myte and myself a perfect, although a tacit, understanding subsisted. I knew that he was always glad to see me when I was presentable, and that he would as lief have seen the devil at his house as Richard Savage, or any other friend, when he was in a sorry plight. He acted with perfect propriety, as the world goes. Poverty is no pleasing spectacle, least of all to those who have emerged out of it. Let not Myte lose in the esteem of my readers what he never lost in mine. I did not respect him the less for his adhesion to the world's forms, and he respected me the more that I submitted to them. If for any human being, he would have broken through them, if he could, for me.

I could not learn much from Gregory in reference to Elizabeth—whom I had often seen (myself unseen) during the last two years, and whose appearance at the theatre, with the tender solicitude for my success her eye conveyed, had, while it assured me of the continuance of her regard, made me conscious how much more I loved her than I had deemed it possible I could love. He had only to tell me (and this information he derived from Merchant,) that Sinclair had pressed his suit with great earnestness, and that he had not hitherto proved successful; but that he con-

fidently relied upon Mrs. Brett's agency towards the completion of his hopes.

His own marriage had, it seemed, been delayed at the joint instance of his father and Myte, who objected to the youth of their children, but who, Gregory suspected, had been severally disappointed, when they laid their heads together over the desk, at finding that each was not so rich as the other had concluded him to be. Old Gregory thought that his son ought not to go to the altar for a trifle; and old Myte was of opinion that his daughter, with a trifle, need not meet at the altar the son of old Gregory. He had been heard by his daughter to mumble something about Lothario once or twice, as a desirable fish not yet utterly beyond the reach of his angle.

Towards Sinclair, I began to entertain no kindly feelings. His insolence at the theatre was not so direct that I could lay hold upon it, for the purpose of making it the foundation of a quarrel, and yet it was so base and unmanly as to justify me to myself in the determination I came to, of seeking a quarrel with him. Besides, his pertinacious persecution of Miss Wilfred, backed, as it was, by my mother, began to irritate me exceedingly. It was high time that I should snatch the prize out of their hands, and at once fulfil my own happiness, satiate my revenge, and gratify my resentment—my revenge against my mother and Sinclair, and my resentment against Steele, which, only since my good fortune, had kindled in my bosom.

In a happy hour I lighted on Merchant, who was exceedingly glad to see me, as, indeed, he ever was; for he knew that his company was acceptable to me. Before me, he could launch forth without fear of rebuke or moral reprehension; but I believe, when he inveighed against the world, that it was merely talk, and that he thought higher of human nature than he chose to acknowledge. We dined together, and compared notes. He listened to my story with interest, and I to his with regret.

"It is my curse or my misfortune, Savage," said he, as we sat over the second bottle, "that, like poor Jack Lovell, (how many of us there are in the world!), with a perfect

knowledge of what is right, I am compelled for ever to do that which is wrong; and not only to do mean things, for many a fine fellow is brought down to that, but to be myself a mean thing. What do you think of laughing because another chooses to be merry, and to be grave because another is in the sulks, and all because that other carries the bag? and not this alone, but to be put upon things that a man's own—d—— it! master—to say it out at once—that one's own master is ashamed of doing in his own person. Nor is this all; to feign a willingness, and to feign it well too, or expulsion and dismissal are your portion; to put on an appearance of alacrity when such things are proposed, and to skulk away to perform them with the crazing consciousness that the most despicable hound you know in the world is not half so despicable as yourself, and that he knows it, and holds you in deserved contempt for it. What is your opinion of a service like this?"

"That it is dog-service," said I indignantly; "Merchant, you shock me. None but a dog——"

"Take not away the character of dogs," he interrupted; "their tails never wag but when they are pleased. I wish I could say the same of my tongue. This paramount fellow, Sinclair—your friend and schoolfellow—I have sold myself to him—that part of a man which is invaluable till it is bargained for, and not worth a rush when it is bought—that have I sold; what the great call honour, and the small, conscience; do you take me?" striking the table with the back of his hand.

"Come, come, you are making too much of this," said I. "Sinclair is your patron, and is probably vain of being so —shows it too grossly sometimes, perhaps. You could not have descended so low, and retained the pride that impelled your speech just now."

"That's it," he exclaimed; "there you're wrong. Did you ever see a little boy tread upon a twig, keeping it to the ground with his foot? When he takes away his foot, up springs the twig, and his young chaps catch it. So it is with a man's pride. He may tread it under his foot, but if he do not break it, 'twill fly into his face as mine

does now. Why had I not seen you oftener? Your example had shamed me. From this day forth I have done with him. I relinquish him to Lemery and Simms."

"And who are they?" I inquired.

"Slaves that will make the devil think human souls are not worth trying after; that they are gudgeons easily caught, and worth nothing. At this moment, the three are about as base a business, as ever brought fruit to the gallows-tree. You will clap your hands when I tell it you; for it is a cross-bite practised upon your delectable mother."

"Aye?" said I, suddenly interested; "how's that? Sinclair and Mrs. Brett are the best friends in life."

"They are so, but what of that?" he replied; "must not old adages be suffered to stand their ground? Have you no respect for our great grandmothers, who got it from Solomon, and have told us what friendship is? Now for my story. There is a young person—a young lady let me call her—living with your mother,—a nominal niece; most great houses are furnished with one."

"You mean Miss Wilfred," I exclaimed, impatiently; "go on, I beseech you."

"You know her, then. Sinclair told me you did not. Well, he conceived a passion for the girl—no wonder. Such a divinity! By heaven! I gnaw my heart when I think of it. But to go on. Miss, wise in her generation, or deficient in taste, wouldn't have the man; prayers—entreaties—threats from Mrs. Brett—no, all would not do; he was not *the* man. Behold now, what a noble scheme enters the heart of my Sinclair—a heart, do you mark? which is now as full of malice as of love—for he has been rejected, you see; and man is a magnanimous fellow in his way. He obtains Mrs. Brett's consent to carry off the girl under pretence of conducting her to the theatre (Mrs. Brett will follow in a few minutes in her chair—do you take?) to his own lodgings, where a parson, less scrupulous than serviceable, is in readiness to tie the knot. That is the understanding with Mrs. Brett, and to that she consents."

"Gracious Heaven! and when is this scheme intended to be put into operation?"

"How pale you turn, and stare!" he returned; "what is all this to you or to me? Such things are done daily. But the worst of it is, this will not be done. Mrs. Brett is to be outwitted. What do you think of lay Lemery for a parson, and secular Simms for a clerk—a sham to save appearances for a time, and to have his revenge upon the girl?"

"Good Heavens! speak," I cried in a frenzy starting from my seat, "when is this to be?"

"It is over by this time, I dare say," he replied; "but what's the matter?"

I had fallen back into my chair, as though shot through the heart. The dew gathered upon my forehead—I had not strength to wipe it thence. "Where is this scene acting?" I demanded in a faint voice.

He evaded my question, which I repeated two or three times. "What signifies it?" he said; "you are not going to turn chevalier for your mother, are you—or for the girl? What ails you?"

"Where is it?" I exclaimed in a voice of thunder, which caused the waiter to pop his head in at the door, and to withdraw it as suddenly. I seized my hat and sword. "The place—the place—by Heaven! I must know it."

"Charing Cross. Robinson's Coffee House."

"That house of infamy! Merchant—" I turned to him, clenching my fist in his face, "if this infernal project shall have proved successful, it were best we never meet again. Your heart's blood shall flow for it. What am I saying? You did not know—you could not know——"

He caught me by the cuff, and the skirt of my coat. "Why, you're not going there? You're drunk—sit down. This fellow Sinclair would make nothing of whipping you through the body. What says Mercutio? 'one, two, and the third in your bosom—the very butcher of a silk button.' If it were Lemery and Simms, now, a great round mouth and a 'bo' would frighten 'em out of the window——"

I tore myself away from him, and rushed into the street. We had been sitting in Morris's Coffee House in Norfolk

Street. Charing Cross was no great distance off. I ran there as fast as my legs would carry me (and they never better served me), and up the long passage leading to the vile house, which I burst into without ceremony.

"Whom may you please to want, sir?" inquired a woman with the most shockingly ill-favoured countenance I had ever beheld, as she met me midway in the entrance, standing there as though bent upon arresting my progress.

"You have a wedding party up stairs, I believe," I brought out, fetching a long breath.

She hesitated a moment. "You are a friend of the gentleman, sir? La! I think I have seen your face before."

"And I yours," I returned; and so I had; but where, I had not time to study. "I *am* a friend of the gentleman—and of the lady, too."

I had said too much, it seemed. "You can't pass: no friends of ladies are allowed here. Dick! Dick!"

Dick, however, was not forthcoming. "Woman," said I, "if you have never beaten hemp at Bridewell, and been whipped there, your turn will soon come, if you do not let me pass you. The constables will soon be at my heels, I promise you."

So saying, I laid my hand upon the shoulders of the frightful woman, and pushing her aside hastened up stairs.

I needed no special direction to the room. The voice of a female in supplication, and as I judged, upon her knees to Sinclair, whose voice I heard too, alternately expostulating and threatening—these were more than enough for me. I tried the handle of the door—it was fast. I knocked loudly at it.

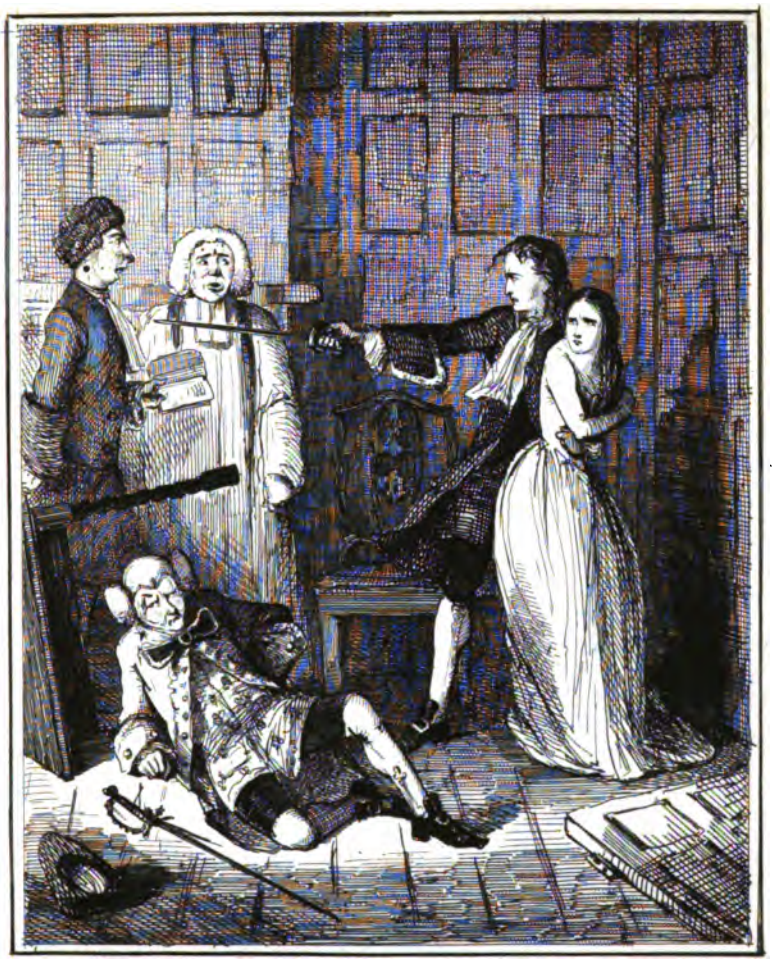
"Who's there? what, in the devil's name is the matter now?" cried Sinclair.

"It is I—open the door—you had better; or I will force it open."

"Who are you? What do you want? Begone, fellow."

"Good sir, whoever you be—I am sure you will be my friend. Release me from these barbarous men." It was Elizabeth who addressed me.

"Trust me, dear madam, I will," I replied. "Sinclair,



The Morte Marriage

London Richard Bentley & Son 1886

you base hound," I exclaimed, trying to force the lock, which, however, resisted all my efforts, "you shall pay dearly for this. My name is Savage——"

A shriek followed—and a clasping together of the hands. "Great Heavens, Mr. Sinclair," cried Elizabeth, "in mercy's name do not——"

I heard no more. With the strength and violence of a madman, having receded several paces, I threw myself upon the door, and burst it open.

Sinclair had measured his distance, and made his lunge well. Had it not been that the force I had exerted caused me to come half headlong into the room, and in an oblique direction, his sword had inevitably gone clean through my body. As it was, it passed through the top of my sleeve, raking my shoulder slightly. Catching hold upon the wrist of his sword-arm, with one hand, I grasped him in the side with the other, and flinging him from me with all my force—a force augmented by hatred and rage, I dashed him against a table spread with decanters and glasses —upon and over which he was thrown, and which, with a crash, came with him to the ground.

He was greatly hurt, for he did not rise, but with loud curses called upon his confederates to thrust me from the room, and make fast the door.

The terrified girl clung about me imploring my protection. "Dear Mr. Savage, you will take me from this place, won't you? I am sure you will. You are not a friend of Mr. Sinclair, as they told me you were."

I had not shown myself so, indeed; nor did I care at that moment to give him any further proof of my enmity. I took the trembling creature round the waist, and led her to the door. Turning to the two men, I said, "You had better not stir. Take care of your master or your friend. He needs your assistance. Your ordination is of recent date, Mr. Lemery. I know you; and, Mr. Simms, when I next see you, you will not cry 'amen' to my greeting."

I hastened down stairs with my fluttering prize, who still clung closely to my arm. An evil-faced, bull-dog looking fellow was in the passage.

"Dick," said I, half familiarly, half imperiously, "I've a guinea for you, when you have got me a coach."

The fellow's face relaxed into amiability. "Your honour," he began——

"Dick, you cowardly rogue you," cried the woman, "let him pass at your peril."

"Draw your sword, sir," said Dick, "and make belief to stick me—only make belief, if you please, your honour."

I did so, and the fellow, affecting a fear that, I'll be sworn, he never felt since he could write or fight man, ran out of the house, protesting that he would not wait to be spitted for the whim of the best woman that ever wore petticoat.

"Pretty doings!" cried the woman, coming forward, "that a gentleman can't marry a lady comfortably——"

"Dear, good woman," began my Elizabeth, "pray, take pity on me—I will bless you for ever."

Such words from an angel to so hideous a hag! I thrust the execrable woman into her room, turning the key against her; and taking my lovely burthen in my arms, carried her down the passage, and placed her in safety in a coach, which had drawn up at the entrance; and thrusting a guinea into Dick's leathern hand, leaped in after her.

"Where to, your honour?" said Dick.

I knew not where. "Hyde Park Gate," said I, and the coach was presently in motion.

CHAPTER XXI.

RICHARD SAVAGE RECEIVES A VISIT FROM A GENTLEMAN OF A PECULIAR TURN IN MORALS, AND TAKES A LAST FAREWELL OF SIR RICHARD STEELE.

It was some time before Elizabeth was mistress sufficiently of her senses, to be made to comprehend that no further violence was to be feared from Sinclair; that she had escaped him, and was now under the protection of a friend who would not leave her till he had seen her to some place of safety. I inferred from her extreme alarm, that Sinclair

had been brute enough to terrify her with menaces, an inference that made me devoutly wish that I had broken the villain's neck, and caused me to regret that I had not taken summary vengeance upon his wretched accomplices.

At length she partly heeded my entreaties, that she would be composed, releasing herself gently from my encircling arm, and withdrawing her hand, which she had unconsciously placed in mine, when I entered the coach.

"O sir!" she exclaimed, "how shall I thank you for preserving me from that wicked man, and what will you think of me that I trusted myself alone with him for a moment? Indeed, it was not my fault—I can explain that."

"I must not permit you—forgive me—to explain anything till you are more yourself," said I. "Collect your spirits, and tell me whither I can have the pleasure of accompanying you. You do not, I hope, intend to return to the house of Mrs. Brett?"

"Not for the world," she replied, hastily. "Pray, Mr. Savage, take me to some place; I do not care how low or humble it is or where, so that it may be away from her. I will never go back to Mrs. Brett. I am sure she arranged the plan with Mr. Sinclair to carry me off, that he might make me forcibly his wife. Do you not think so, sir? I am a very unhappy girl, Mr. Savage, and she has made me so, who never injured her in word or thought. I would have laid down my life for her, had she wished it, and she knew it. Was it not barbarous of her to persecute me?"

I checked her softly. There was a wildness in her air, and in her eyes, and in her voice that alarmed me. "Was it not barbarous of her to persecute me!" There was something so touching in that appeal, that it made me hate the woman who had occasioned it more thoroughly at that moment, than I could ever bring myself to do (and I have tried heartily) since.

"Dear madam," I observed, "you can easily escape her malice—if I can suppose that even Mrs. Brett can entertain any malice against you—at any rate you may defeat her designs, whether malicious or otherwise, by placing

yourself under the protection of your father. Shall I order the coachman to drive us to his house?"

She joyfully assented to the proposal; and I gave the necessary directions to the coachman.

"And yet," she said, after a pause, "I fear my father will be very angry with me. He has for some time past, so Mrs. Brett has assured me, encouraged Mr. Sinclair's addresses; and who knows (for I have learned, I fear, to distrust every body) but this dreadful scheme may have been undertaken with his concurrence?"

"This is not the time, my dear young lady," I replied, with a due sense of my own importance in the business, "to disclose what were Mr. Sinclair's intentions, which I discovered in a manner I cannot but consider as providential; but, be assured, he will not for his own sake think of molesting you again."

"You terrify me. Mr. Sinclair's intentions were——"

"Worthy of Mr. Sinclair, madam. Pray, be not alarmed. You have nothing to fear from Sir Richard Steele's displeasure. Mrs. Brett will answer for herself, and she will be made to do so. Her treatment of her own son has been such as will hardly justify the world to itself, which is well acquainted with her conduct, in feeling any surprise at her unwomanly treatment, even of the daughter of Sir Richard Steele."

My feelings had carried me too far. They were never in safe keeping when I trusted myself to speak of Mrs. Brett. Perhaps, too, I hardly believed what my words seemed to hint—that she was a party with Sinclair in the sham marriage; and yet I grievously suspected it.

"Good heavens! I think I understand you now," exclaimed Elizabeth. "Can it be that Mrs. Brett—no, no, I must not—I should not think that. O, Mr. Savage!" taking my hand between hers, "how infinitely grateful I ought to be, and will be, to you."

Selfish slave that I was! how I delighted in this assurance which, while it immeasurably overpaid my service, made me feel like a creditor yearning for a hundredfold his due.

By this time, we were come to Steele's house. I got out,

and requested to see Sir Richard instantly, on particular business. He was at his "Hovel" at Hampton, but was expected in town on the following morning. I returned to the coach in some perplexity, and related the unwelcome news.

"Unfortunate!" said Elizabeth: "what trouble I give you, dear sir; but I have no other friend to look to in my distress. If I knew where to go—or who would receive me——"

An expedient suggested itself to me. "I have a friend," said I, "living but a short distance off, whose wife and daughter, most respectable and amiable ladies, would, I venture to say, be most happy to pay you every attention. It is happily thought on. I hope I hardly need say, my honour——"

"You are only too good," she said hastily; and with a blush added, "While I am under the protection of Mr. Savage, I know I am quite safe. Wherever you please to take me, I know I shall be kindly used."

Not even Sinclair could have resisted this, had it been said to him—unworthy, as he was, of so confiding a sweetness. The driver once more put his jaded steeds into paralytic progression, and we were shortly at Myte's door. Requesting Miss Wilfred to excuse me for a minute, I alighted from the coach, and had Myte called down stairs. I drew him into a side-room.

"I have brought a young lady to see you, sir."

"A lady!" cried he, scratching his ear, "what! the lady of all others—'the inexpressive she—' the lady whose eyes made your heart go 'thump,' and who has at last taken pity on you?"

"A lady," said I, "who stands in need of Mrs. Myte's care and protection, which I am certain you will readily permit her to extend to Miss Wilfred, when I have told you the circumstances."

"Whew!" cried Myte, when I had concluded, and he ran out of the room, I following him, and was presently at the coach door.

"My dear young lady," said he, with a low and graceful

bow, "prav do me the honour of taking my arm. You are most welcome. My ladies will be delighted to make your acquaintance. Ricardo there, has told me every thing."

"You are very—very kind," returned the grateful girl. "Mr. Savage has obliged me beyond expression."

"And us, too, I assure you," replied Myte with a gallant air, "by entrusting so charming a lady to our protection."

"Now, Ricardo," said he, when I had discharged the fare, "give Miss Wilfred your more serviceable arm, and follow me. I go flying up stairs to let the womenkind know their hearts are wanted. Flusterina!" running into the room, "show yourself worthy of the name, and scamper after your salts, which you can carry in one hand, while you bring a bottle of wine with the other. Here's Ricardo has brought a young lady, whom he has rescued out of the hands of the Philistines, some of whom have been handed down to these times. Vandal, my love, become acquainted with Miss Wilfred."

Mrs. Myte obeyed her husband's behest, snatching, as she retired, a hasty glance at Elizabeth; and the dear little Martha led her to a seat with a look of compassionate interest and regard which made her face, for the moment, almost as beautiful (she will pardon me this) as that of her guest.

"No notes of interrogation and interjection," cried Myte, when his wife reappeared with a bottle and glasses, "till Miss Wilfred has drunk two bumpers of wine. Bumpers, let them be. Take it off, young lady, and don't mind my women, who will be very glad, I dare say, to accept your gratitude before they have done any thing to deserve it. Nay, no bird-sips. Never be ashamed of doing what your father has so often done before you. Was I right there, Ricardo," he added, taking me aside, "in alluding to Sir Richard, of that name the first—immortal Dicky!"

Elizabeth now began to utter fervent acknowledgments of the kindness of the two ladies.

"When you know them better, madam," said Myte, interposing, "you will find out what I have long ago discovered to my cost, that they're common English crockery—you may match 'em in any house in the street."

He took me to the other end of the room. "Charming creature, eh? isn't she?" said he, looking up at me, with a bent and critical brow. "Don't you think the room seems lighter and warmer with her face in it? Una—the very name. I shall call her Una. But, Ricardo, you look as grim as a rat-catcher when he sees a tabby. What ailest thou? Shall we have a sneaker of punch down stairs?"

"With all my heart. I was thinking it would be better we should leave the ladies together for a time."

"You are right. My women's ears are thirsty for all that Una is anxious to pour into them. Leave them alone to follow a long story till they run their sage noses against the end of it. Ladies, this gentleman and I are about to leave you!"

"Is Mr. Savage going?" said Elizabeth, rising, in some confusion. Martha's eye met mine, and I detected a slight smile upon her lip. Mr. Myte exchanged a glance with his wife.

"We return presently, madam," he answered; "a voice from the plantations calls us hence. When we have heard what it has to say to us, we shall rejoin you."

"A pity," said Myte, as we descended the stairs, "that women can't keep their own secrets better than other people's. Una is determined you shan't steal her heart without letting all the world know the robbery you have committed."

"My dear Mr. Myte," I cried in a rapture, "and do you really think——"

"Never," he returned. "My brain only grows mustard and cress—a little dish of notions soon raised. A fresh crop every other day. But while I mix the punch, you must tell your tale again. Shockingly concise the first time. Meat, pudding, and custard all on the table at once."

I was not unwilling, I confess, to recount my recent exploit at large, since it afforded me the opportunity of lowering Sinclair in the esteem of Myte, and of raising Gregory by the comparison. After we had entered, I related the whole particulars of the fray, and made him

acquainted with the means through which I had become possessed of Sinclair's intentions.

"This is all very well," said Myte, when I had finished, "but I never hear of any thing that has taken place, but I wish that I had been there to have seen it; for those that have seen it commonly tell it as though they had only heard it. I want not only to know *what* took place, but *how* it occurred. I don't care for the list of killed and wounded, I like to see the battle. Now—you run down the Strand like a man who has debts to pay, and happens to be in a hurry. Head first into the tavern you go. You jostle past Mother Shocking in the passage, and up stairs. The door is burst open. How looks Mr. Sinclair—where is he?"

"Guarding the door—in attitude, as I conjecture—brows and teeth set—his sword——

"Like a thin streak of lightning a-tilt at your vitals, ha! ha!" cried Myte. "You close with him, and throw him over a table. Break his leg——"

"I hope not," said I; "but he is much hurt, for he attempted to rise two or three times, but could not."

"Let him be," said Myte. "Where is the terrified victim?"

"Rising from her knees when I first saw her—her hands clasped—her eyes wild—her head-dress in disorder. Immediately afterwards she was clinging to my arm."

"And the two worthy associates—Conrad and Borachio—what are they about?"

"They stood to all appearance paralysed; nor did they stir an inch the whole time."

"Although the gentleman on the floor," said Myte, "besought them in the language they best understood to do so. Pretty innocents! I should like their effigies for my coal cellar. Well, was there no painted thing in petticoats with a white handkerchief in one hand and a bottle in the other, in case of a fainting—to attend upon the bride?"

"There was not."

"That's strange," said Myte. "And what is this place—this Robinson's?"

"I need not tell you. No place for Miss Wilfred. You understand me?"

Myte emitted a loud sound like a cluck, and flinging up his arms, went and hid his head in a corner.

"I'll tell you what," said he, turning round; "this Lothario will make the finest gentleman in town, one of these days. I have great hopes of him, if busy brothers and lenient husbands will but let him alone. And this, you think, has been planned in concert with your mother?"

"I am certain of it," I replied; but I was not so. She who gave me breath had begun to teach me to misuse it.

"O, the dear creature!" cried Myte; "one glass to her health, if you think it won't choke us. Richard Savage," he added, with a very unusual gravity and earnestness, "I ought to be obliged to you, and I am. This has cured me. This man would have broken my Martha's heart, and that would have broken mine. Drink up the punch, and let us go above stairs. Sir Richard Steele ought to love you for this. If he do not—I'll burn his books, and never read his 'Tender Husband' and 'Conscious Lovers' again. And, furthermore, I'll buy up all his bonds, and make him pay 'em—if I can."

"That was well added," cried I.

"I have tried and failed in less hopeless attempts, I acknowledge," said Myte. "Come along. What will my son Langley and his wife think of this? Lothario was a vast favourite with them."

"Money in his purse, and a long rent-roll, and who would not be?" thought I, as I followed him.

When Myte returned to the ladies, his wife and daughter simultaneously opened their mouths upon him.

"How could you ever think favourably of Mr. Sinclair, my love?" said Mrs. Myte. "I always told you I had no opinion of him."

"I was never deceived in Mr. Sinclair," said Martha; "but, papa, you know you were always so obstinate, and would never listen to reason."

"You are two very wise little women, and I'm a very foolish little man," returned Myte, somewhat chagrined.

"Mr. Richard Savage," he added, "I have settled my wisdom upon my wife and daughter lest the world might rob me of it, if I carried it about with me."

"You are right," said I, laughing. "Wisdom, like gold, is best left at home. Small change suffices out of doors. But, unlike gold, there are very few that crave it."

"I shall say that the next time I am rallied upon my dulness," said Myte. "But if very few crave it, why am I right for leaving it at home? I might as well take it with me. Nay, you shan't sit down to-night. It is getting late; and Miss Wilfred is exhausted. I wonder whether Semiramis intends to sit up for you, madam? Shall I send round and inquire?"

"Semiramis!" repeated Elizabeth, in vague surprise.

"I mean Mrs. Brett. You are not accustomed to my modes of speech, madam. We shall be better known to each other by-and-by."

"Indeed I hope we shall, sir," she replied. "I shall ever be anxious to deserve the esteem of Mr. Savage's friends."

"Go along home after that," said Myte, in a low tone; "if you should knock your head against the stars, it is not your fault, but hers."

"But what we all want to know before Mr. Savage goes, is this," cried Mrs. Myte. "How did he discover that Miss Wilfred was carried off by Sinclair?"

"Yes, we must hear that," said Martha. "Presumptuous man! to think of marrying a lady against her will, indeed!"

"Indeed, that is often thought on, and done, too," said Myte. "But Ricardo leaves that to me to tell," with a wink at me.

A pressure of the hand—a few disordered words, and a look which was better than words, had they been the best that even her lips could have spoken—these lifted me above the ground as I left Myte's house.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHICH TREATS OF DIVERS MATTERS VERY NECESSARY TO BE READ BY ALL WHO WOULD ACQUIRE A FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE CHARACTER OF RICHARD SAVAGE.

WITHIN a month, Sir Richard Steele withdrew his daughter from Myte's house. The Countess of Hertford had kindly consented to take her under her care, saying that Miss Wilfred would be useful to her in many ways, but chiefly in the instruction of her children, till they became of sufficient age to require the assistance of masters. During Elizabeth's stay at Myte's house, Steele frequently called there, and upon every occasion very handsomely acknowledged the obligation he lay under to the little man and his family for the protection they had afforded his daughter.

"Odso! as Bickerstaff says," remarked Myte to me afterwards, "he was so mightily civil and polite to me, that I thought he wanted to borrow money, which, since the chancellor's decision against him in the suit of Wilks, Cibber, and Booth, which ties him up from drawing any more money from the theatre for some time to come, would be but a brittle bowl for any gold fish. If he had left Una with me as security, now, and were not going to the land of goats and flannel, he might have prevailed upon me to lend him as much as I knew he could be made to repay. Lord, what an honest gentleman he is, if good intentions were of value in the market!"

Sir Richard, it appeared, while he but slightly adverted to the timely aid I had offered his daughter, informed her that he had waited upon Mrs. Brett, and had avowed the strong indignation he felt towards her, for permitting Elizabeth to be in the power of Sinclair, even for a moment; and when Mrs. Brett was at length obliged to confess that she had given her consent to a forced marriage, and had purposely left the coach to facilitate its contraction, he flung away from her in a rage, declaring not only that his

daughter should never return to her house, but that he begged to relinquish all further acquaintance with her. He said further that he wished the villany of Sinclair to be kept private, since he did not desire to destroy the character of Mrs. Brett, which must be irretrievably ruined should her conduct become known; adding, that the world would never be brought to believe that Sinclair's intentions and her own were not one. He had already enjoined the strictest secrecy upon Myte and his family, and he hoped if Elizabeth *retained* (he used the word) any influence over me, she would dissuade me from the publication of my mother's participation of the matter, and, indeed, of the entire adventure. He assured her, the day previous to her departure, that her hand should be at her own disposal, and expressed his confidence in her sense and judgment, and in conclusion consented to Elizabeth's reception of me as her future husband, if the Countess of Hertford permitted my visits, and I should be found (how I detest setting this down) at once worthy, and likely to make my way in the world, which he thought far from improbable.

But this last was told me long afterwards.

In the mean while, I attached myself more closely to Merchant, whom I felt bound in honour to relieve, so far as in me lay, seeing that I had been the indirect means of his losing a patron. He told me, when I saw him for the first time after the scene at Robinson's, that Sinclair, as soon as he was able to leave his bed, had left London, he believed, for Scotland; and that he had sent a message to him by Lemery, to the effect that when he returned to town he should do himself the pleasure of waiting upon him, and of cropping his ears.

"I laughed at this, and snapped my fingers at Lemery," continued Merchant; "not that I am a man of war, not that I am a man to cry ha! ha! at the thunder of the captains and the shouting, but that I estimate threats at their real worth, which like promises that carry futurity on their backs, sink under their burden before they reach their destination."

"And how is the amiable Lemery?" I inquired.

"In doleful dump," returned Merchant; "the departure of his very good friend, the tide on which he sailed, has left him 'high and dry,' as seamen, I believe, say. He won't be able to keep his vices alive; and of all the trials that can befall a man, that of being virtuous when he does not wish to be so, is the most vexatious and perplexing. He accuses me of having been instrumental in taking the bread out of several deserving mouths, his own being one; and cannot but wonder how a man of the world, as he honours you by proclaiming Richard Savage to be, should officiously have intruded himself where he was likely to have been pushed through the body. 'But,' said he, with a smirk and a shrug like Bullock, the actor, 'Mr. Savage is a poet, a very rising genius, Merchant. I assure you the distress of his Sir Thomas—what was it called? Bucklesbury, or some such name—affected me greatly. A great deal of feeling and human nature in it; but what have we of the world to do with feeling and human nature? Nothing whatever. The worst of poets is, they can't look at the affairs of this life with a prose eye.'"

The sage Lemery was wrong. No class of men more than poets have occasion to do so, or more frequently. In a short time I had again the prospect of immediate indigence before me. It has often been observed to me by friends, whose prudence was more active, or whose desires were more limited than my own, that the allowance made to me by Mrs. Oldfield was sufficient to compass a decent subsistence. It might have been—I believe it was; but besides that I could never make it accord with my nature to spend niggardly what was freely bestowed, I never learned the art of starving my own gratification, when I had the means of satisfying it, however those means might have been acquired. I never knew the value of money, either with or without it. When the pocket was empty, it must be recruited; that I knew full well. To tell me that a certain sum ought to last a certain time, argued a desire in the teller to fit me by his own measure—not so, by the bye—to restrict me to a sum that he himself would have scorned to attempt to live upon; for I have seldom

found any of these prudent advisers follow their own maxim. Surely he least deserves fortune who least trusts her. If I have enjoyed few of her smiles, I have at least deserved them, if it be only on the score of my mistaken reliance upon her. They were freely bestowed, and there was a curve in the corner of the gipsy's mouth that seemed to promise future and greater favours. They are to come. It is not too late.

Burridge had relinquished his school, and was settled in London for the remainder of his life. I felt a degree of awe in the old gentleman's presence (a remnant of the school feeling) which I cannot call to mind—if I ever experienced it—having been sensible of before any other human being. Age had not improved Burridge. There is, perhaps, a tendency in every man who, having abjured the follies and vices of his youth, re-establishes his fortune and his position in the world, by dint of his own exertions, to glorify himself and to exalt the merit of his achievement, and to feel a corresponding contempt for those who will not, and a distrust of those who cannot, have recourse to similar methods towards the same end. Burridge had a horror of being obliged, or of being thought to be so, to mankind; and he delighted overmuch in vaunting his own independence. Now, although there are many men who love and practise independence that are worthy patrons, and as many who hate being obliged that can confer great obligations, yet these are not the men whom you can readily ask, or from whom you can safely receive service or assistance. And yet (not knowing, what I now know) I ventured an application to Burridge. He did, and hardly did, as much as I requested, and with a very bad grace; and with an intimation, moreover, that this his first favour was to be his last. This conduct shocked and somewhat incensed me.

"Not that I designed to request a like favour again, or often from you," said I, almost resentfully; "but because you suppose I shall do so, it is, that I beg you to take back the sum you have placed in my hand. I will not accept it. Trust me, Mr. Burridge, you have not spoken well or handsomely."

"Ah well!" said he, "it is my way, and I can't help it. I shan't take it back. You want it, or you had not asked for it. What I said, was said out of kindness—out of friendship. Trust *me*, Dick—the man who is often beholden to his friends, is oftener in need than he who earns his guinea a week. I want to see you above being obliged to such an old curmudgeon as Francis Burridge. He is no better than his neighbours, after all; and will be telling his good deeds, like the rest."

I was a little softened—"You will not do so, I am sure, sir."

"Don't be too sure," he replied, hastily, "*I* am not. It is true, he who proclaims his benevolence, cancels the obligation incurred by it; but don't you see that were I to act so by you, you would feel yourself my debtor; and it is a cursed feeling to owe money to a man whom you despise and whom you cannot pay. Out upon it! live, and get the means whereby you live, and save wherewithal to support you, when the hands and the head can do no more work. Look at Steele, now: *Sir* Richard, an empty title, that; much good may it do him! It has done him none hitherto. There is a man of parts—of genius! What opportunities have looked that man in the face, desiring him to lay hold upon 'em; but he has turned his back upon 'em all. Why, he tells me he's going to retire to Wales, when he gets his affairs settled; and I doubt, cheap as the living is there, whether he'll have enough to live upon. Now, I have a leg of mutton for life, and pudding at the other end of the table, and a bottle of wine in the cellar."

Burridge then fell to advising, and the utterance of common-places. Leg-of-mutton and pudding exhortations, that, if followed, might enable a man to get a bottle of wine into his cellar, but would probably induce him to keep it there. I hate, as I always did hate, these vocal exercitations, which mean nothing more than that the performer is excessively pleased with himself and his doings. To say the truth, all advice, well-meant or otherwise, particularly the former, is loathsome to me. I myself never advise anybody, except not to take advice. Perhaps I shall utter

something more true than new, when I say that advice is like physic; nobody cares to take it; nobody takes half that is prescribed; and not half that is taken does a man any good.

Henceforth I saw Burridge but seldom. Let me be just to him. He loved me, and if advice could have done it, would have served me; but I am not sure if, impatient of my obstinacy in declining to follow his directions, he did not as obstinately enforce them. O man, what a good fellow thou mightst be made, if thou didst not already think thyself so very good! Pity so little virtue should be too much for us; but a great deal would not be too much, if we could only learn to keep our plaguy mouths shut.

I believe I have incidentally informed the reader that I was acquainted with Aaron Hill, the poet and projector—happier as the former than the latter, since I believe his projects have almost as much depressed his fortune, as his poetry has raised his fame. The modesty of this gentleman is, if possible, greater than his merit; and if at any time he feels, or has ever felt, a reluctance to undertake a good action, it is because he shrinks from an acceptance of the gratitude that is called forth by it.

Aaron Hill had shown his kindness towards me by supplying a prologue and epilogue for my Overbury; but he had previously evinced his magnanimity by permitting me to reject the alterations he had, at my own instance, condescended to make in it—a magnanimity the more conspicuous, when it is remembered that clumsy Colley was permitted afterwards to lick the kid into the shape of one of his own cubs.

A man of merit in letters, or a man whom he supposed to be so, was ever certain of Hill's countenance and support. Upon being made acquainted with the state of my affairs, he warmly and zealously plunged into a consideration of the best means of altering it. What was I, or rather, what was he to do? what was to be done? His brain was at all times teeming with projects, as much for the benefit of others, as for his own; and a project speedily suggested itself to him so strange—so attractive in purpose, but so repulsive in plan, that it fairly staggered me. He was at that time one of the conductors of a weekly work,

called The Plain Dealer, the sale of which was not so extensive as it was select. He suggested to me to issue proposals of subscription to a volume of Miscellanies; and himself offered to prepare an account of my birth, parentage, and education, to be published in The Plain Dealer, which he doubted not would interest the town in my behalf, and make them willing to show their sense of my misfortunes by subscribing to my book.

I hesitated a long time before I would consent to this. It is true, I longed to tell the world in print how I had been treated by Mrs. Brett: so much so, indeed, that I was loth that to any one else should be confided the telling; least of all was I desirous that Hill should be that man. Hill had too little of the devil in him, to shame or to shake so prevailing a fury as this. While he sympathised with my wrongs, and (I believe he spoke the truth when he averred it) almost felt them as his own—yet his expression of them would be his own—not mine. He could not feel as I felt. His heat would be that of a generous domestic man, seated by his comfortable fire, stirring it, probably, oftener and with better effect than his own bosom would be stirred;—mine was the fervour of a fiend, as poignant, if not so wicked, as the one I had to deal with, ministering at a volcano.

I did not tell him this, but pleading my pride, which would not permit me to publish my misfortunes so abjectly to the world, with many acknowledgments, declined his offer. He expostulated with me—urging, that when a man's poverty was not the consequence of his own crimes or indiscretion, there could be no disgrace in his avowing it, or degradation in craving assistance to enable him to extricate himself from it. He added, that when a man suffered himself to linger in a state of wretchedness, the world were almost justified in attributing his obstinate immobility rather to shame than to pride—in thinking that he deserved to sink without help, not that he disdained to rise with it. Furthermore, he reminded me that I was not asking charity; but soliciting a subscription to a book; and since each subscriber would have value for his money,

I need not consider myself as a man under an obligation of gratitude; but simply as one who has availed himself of a very fair and candid expedient to make his wants publicly known, and who is very much obliged to those who choose to assist him in surmounting them.

It is possible that had I possessed as much faith in the success of this measure as Hill undoubtedly felt, I might with less reluctance have given my consent to it, which, at length, I did with so bad a grace as must have disgusted a man less generous and disinterested than my friend. As I foresaw, so it was. Hill's statement, although full of warm and manly resentment of my mother's barbarity, was mixed up with so much piteous and mawkish commiseration of myself, that I was thoroughly ashamed to show my face in any of the coffee houses for some days after its publication. In addition to his statement, he had supplied a copy of verses purporting to have been written by the meritorious applicant for subscriptions, so woe-begone, so wretched, so puling! They were verses to set a man thinking to what a depth of pusillanimous abjectness the wretch could be reduced who could write and print them. And it was stated that they were mine. My wig suffered for them, when I had read them, and my finger-nails, which I knawed to the quick. How *she* must have laughed at—scorned—jeered me!

Betwixt an uneasy (uneasy because it was a perfect) consciousness of the sincere friendship of Hill, and a disgust at the manner in which he had pleased to display it, I found myself in a state of the most perplexing irresolution as to what course I should pursue. At length, perceiving that my acquaintance could look upon me without a laugh or a sneer, and that many of them appeared to interest themselves in the success of my proposals, I ventured upon a visit to the "Plain Dealer," who received me with extended arms.

He listened to my remonstrances with that amiable and supreme smile common to projectors, nodding his head as I proceeded, as though he knew not only what I had said, was saying, and was proceeding to say; but also as though

he was aware, indeed, how little sense and wisdom found its way into some skulls, and how much was safely housed in others.

"Have you been to Button's?" said he, when I had concluded; "there, you know, we have advertised that subscriptions are received."

"I have not."

"Why not?" he returned, with raised brows, but with a kind of prim composure.

"To say the truth, Hill, I can't face the drawer. The fellow would burst in my face."

"Really, Savage," said he, "you have as poor an opinion of your own merit, as you appear to have of my testimony to it. Go thither, I entreat; or I will. I shall be greatly mistaken if you do not find it worth your while."

Hill was right. He had baited his hook with a worm, and the fish caught at it; shall I add, and *were* caught? The reader may, if he please. What was my amazed delight when, calling at Button's, I found that more than seventy guineas had been left for me at the bar! What was my exultation of triumph, when, running my eye over the list of subscribers, I perceived that it chiefly consisted of the names of the nobility!

This was beyond expectation—above my hopes. What of subterfuge now was left to Mrs. Brett? How henceforth could she evade—evade she might—but how could she deny the reality of my claims? I had the satisfaction of hearing, from many quarters, that she was greatly disconcerted by this exposure; and although she persisted in her old story, that I was the son of a poor couple to whom her own child had been entrusted, which child had died in its infancy, yet, whereas she had formerly been under the necessity of telling this falsehood to a few who believed her, she was now compelled to relate it everywhere, and to be believed by none.

Old Burridge urged moderation—exhorted charity—whispered forbearance. Pshaw! could he judge of my fever by feeling his own pulse? I had my mother at a disadvantage, and I was resolved, if possible, to keep her

so. I had been too long moderate, charitable and forbearing, and what had I gained by being so?

I hurried the Miscellanies through the press, and ushered them into the world with a preface. I think it was sufficiently apparent in this production that, although Hill was acquainted with every particular of my history, and had correctly related it in the Plain Dealer, yet that I had not been consulted as to the manner or the spirit in which it was presented to the public. Elevated by my recent good fortune, I executed this short performance with a mischievous and a devilish humour, which is, I suspect, nowhere apparent in my present narrative.

But, whatever might be said of this preface, considered as a satirical and humorous composition, I admit that it was written in the vilest taste. The man can claim little sympathy for his misfortunes, who is the first, himself, to jest at them; and it may fairly be inferred of him who exhibits no sense of his own wrongs, except that which prompts resentment against the author of them, that he will be equally callous to the wrongs of his species. But the world in general is not a very reason-seeking world, and it was not my purpose to excite sympathy. They applauded my spirit, and my wit, and took part against my mother—which was all I cared for.

The Earl of Tyrconnel, a nephew of Mrs. Brett, expressed a desire, shortly after the publication of the Miscellanies, to know me. I was introduced to him at Will's. He saluted me with great politeness, passing many flattering encomiums upon my abilities.

"Mr. Savage," he said in a very friendly manner before I left him, "I have long deplored the unnatural quarrel between Mrs. Brett and yourself. Forgive me for taking the liberty of remarking, that, however I may admire the vigorous sallies and sprightly humour of your preface, I cannot but lament that you penned it, or consented to print it."

"Your lordship," said I, in the utmost good humour, however, "directs your lamentations to the wrong person. You should lament my mother's wickedness before you

blame my resentment of it. To submit to oppression is to deserve it. I was not made in the mould of Hamlet's Horatio,

"'As one, in suffering all, who suffers nothing.'"

"Nay, you would have us believe you are," he returned, laughing. "But, seriously, no man condemns your mother more than I do, and have done. Don't you perceive, however, that having made the town a party to your quarrel, there is no hope of a future accommodation?"

"There is no hope, where there is no inclination, my Lord," I replied, "and *that*, neither of us, I believe, is likely to feel. The town will have forgotten us both, before we are disposed to forgive each other."

He said little more at this time, but took many subsequent opportunities of assuring me how happy he should be to serve me in any way—hinted his intimacy with the minister, and at length gave me strong hopes of being able to obtain for me a lucrative appointment.

I was very much obliged to him.

I shall have more to speak of Lord Tyrconnel, and more at large ere long. I dismiss him, therefore, for the present.

The death of George the First furnished occasion to the poets of raising a monument of verse to his memory. I brought my stone to it, and it was a heavy one. A stone I had some difficulty in carrying, and which I was heartily glad to "get shot of," as Mrs. Short would have said. I should not have mentioned these verses at all—for I am duly ashamed of them, in spite of the assurances of my friends at the time that I had borne away the palm from my competitors, whose friends severally told them doubtless the same thing—but that they obtained for me an invitation to the house of the Countess of Hertford, a lady who loved kings and queens, whether dead or living; —the living, perhaps, better than the dead; and who, accordingly, was disposed to a favourable opinion of the man who could celebrate them.

I soon discovered that her ladyship was acquainted with the attachment subsisting between Elizabeth and myself,

and that she approved it. On my taking leave, she pressed me warmly to repeat my visits, an encouragement of which I availed myself. Confiding in the promises of Lord Tyrconnel; but assured at all events that a man of my capacity and pretensions (was there ever a young man that was not a greater ass than he looked?)—assured, I say, that a man of my pretensions need never wait long for an honourable and profitable employment, I expatiated to Elizabeth upon the prospects before me—before *us*, and filled the dear girl's heart with hopes as strong as, and more trusting, than my own. Lady Hertford counselled prudence and circumspection, and fortified her reasonings with "modern instances" of young couples—a gloomy and spirit-harrowing series they were—who had begun well, gone on languishingly (some, by-the-by, hap-hazard), and ended most wofully.

Elizabeth would tremble and turn pale when she heard these dirge-like warnings, and would turn towards me with asking eyes, to be re-assured. A glance of mine comforted her. At present, however, we could not be imprudent, if we would.

Blest with the love of this sweet young creature;—my best friend about to attain that felicity which I hoped would ere long be mine—(for Myte had at length consented to Gregory's marrying his daughter)—my prospects opening before me, or about to open—my reputation with the world on the increase; full of life, youth, vivacity, vigour of the mind and of the body——

I pause; but not out of fear to proceed. No remorse or shame is mine. But things acted or suffered, that sink deep into the heart, although the deeper they sink, the surer are they when memory would review them. Yet it demands time to recall them—to lift them up out of their place—their hole. I will give to-night to this work.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHEREIN THE MOST LAMENTABLE EVENT THAT EVER BEFELL OUR AUTHOR IS DESCRIBED AT LARGE.

HAVING made a rough mental draft of a considerable poem, to the completion of which I purposed to devote myself, I found it expedient to the due execution of it to retire from London. In the quiet and seclusion of the country I could pursue my studies without interruption; or rather (for a man may live, if he pleases, as sequestered in London as in a wilderness), withdrawn from the temptation of taverns and company, which I could never resist on the spot, I gave myself a chance of labouring my work successfully, so that it might place me in that rank amongst men of letters which, I had an opinion, my abilities entitled me to hold.

Accordingly, I had taken a lodging at Richmond. Doubtful, however, of the stability of the resolution I had formed, of abjuring the town for several months, I continued to rent my rooms there, which were in Great Queen Street, Westminster. A fortnight passed at Richmond confirmed me in my virtuous determination; which the gentle reader will not be surprised that I maintained, when I inform him that during that period I saw Elizabeth Wilfred daily, who was living with the Countess of Hertford, at her delightful villa on the Thames.

Prudence, whose persuasions were seldom very pressing upon me, induced me to go up to London for the purpose of discharging my lodging at Westminster. I had despatched this business, and was crossing St. James's Park on my return to Richmond, when I was met by Gregory and Merchant.

The two laughed heartily at my apparition as I approached them.

"Ho! ho!" cried Merchant, "how comes it, good hermit, that we meet thee so far away from thy cell, and in this worldly garb—a laced cravat where the flowing

beard should be? Nevertheless, thy blessing, father. Give us a root each, pr'ythee, if thou hast any about thee."

"I have the root of all evil—a few guineas," said I, "which I have not come to London to eradicate, I assure you. I am returning to Richmond;" and I told them what had brought me to town.

"Many a pilgrim who never reached the shrine," said Gregory. "Come, you must spend the day with us. Having got you, we don't mean to part with you. Moreover, to-morrow we will accompany you back to Richmond." I hesitated.

"Don't you know," urged Merchant, "that in a few days Gregory, 'to torturing and tormenting flames must render up himself,' at the altar of Hymen; and that mine uncle's death enables me to live a little longer without my wits? Let us three make fools of ourselves to-day, be wise who will. The louder Folly jingles her bells, the more likely is she to make Wisdom."

It was to be; I consented to pass the day with my friends. I should return to my studies with a greater zest after it. It would establish my good resolutions. A man never wants reasons when the pursuit is pleasure.

We strolled to Chelsea, and having dined there, decided that it was impossible we could mend our quarters. The wine was good, and the company of each better than the wine; and good company takes small heed of the clock. To our surprise it was midnight when we arose to leave. The lateness of the hour made me willing to engage a bed for the night where we were; but upon inquiring of the drawer, I found that every room was occupied.

In this emergency, Merchant, who either had drunk deeper than Gregory or myself, or upon whom the wine had taken more effect, proposed that we should amuse ourselves by wandering about the streets all night—an amusement that lacked the charm of novelty to me, and was by no means new to the proposer, but to which Gregory readily assented, observing that this was the one of all the fooleries of young fellows of which he had never been guilty, and that he held, a man should have shone a fool

in all the phases of folly before he presumed to marry a wife.

"He needs no such credentials, brother," cried Merchant; "the man who marries a wife takes the first form as a matter of course. Savage, make yourself *one*, and lead the way. Strange, gentlemen, that wine should set a man's eyes quarrelling, like man and wife. They won't see to each other. Each sets up sight on its own account."

We sallied into the street; Merchant, who in his cups, was alternately frolicsome and mischievous, bringing up the rear, vociferating a song. The wine we had drunk had flustered Gregory and myself, and had made us very ready to enter upon any new scheme of pleasure that might be laid before us; it had, at the same time, induced a sense of our own exceeding wisdom, coolness, and self-possession; a conceit not uncommon with men who can see that their companion is in a worse plight than themselves. We resolved to stand by our friend Merchant, and take care that he brought himself to no harm; a resolution which sober men might have commended, and would themselves have followed; for Merchant, when drunk, was a man who required very good friends indeed to manage him; for although sometimes he was perfectly good-humoured, and would continue so, yet a trifle would make him otherwise, and then there was no vehemence of extravagance—no brutality of language or of action—of which he would not be guilty, especially towards strangers who persisted in taking no heed of him.

By the time we had reached town our charge became excessively violent and troublesome, calling us with many scurrilous epithets a couple of poor pitiful rogues, who neither had a sense of enjoyment in ourselves, nor a tolerance of those who had.

"Come along," he exclaimed, breaking from us; "let's turn into a night cellar, and see some of our betters whom the world can't away with, because they practise the world's ways openly, and without grave professions. I assert decisively—it is not to be contradicted—that the company of thieves is the very best to be met with in London. They

are at once polite, considerate, and respectful; generous to a fault, and for a song! Gay can't write thieves' songs; the man has stolen none of that inspiration."

"Come along, you blockhead, you," cried Gregory, taking him roughly by the shoulder, "thieves are worthy and excellent fellows; but they are, very properly, particular as to their company. Plain men like ourselves, who have done nothing to entitle ourselves to their good offices, have no right to intrude ourselves into their society. No sect more jealous and exclusive than that of thieves."

"You're wrong, Gregory, but being drunk, we must not be too critical with you. No men more liberal, or who have less of the narrowness of a sect than thieves, whom I love as much for that as for their other virtues. But, hilloah! a light in Robinson's coffee-house. Friend Gregory"—and he turned about and took him by the coat—"this is a house to which Savage and I must insist upon introducing you. The worthiest creature keeps it! A woman, sir, who, happily for her, till her time comes, has not the remotest conception that there can be the slightest distinction between right and wrong, and who, it is to be presumed, as frequently practises the one as the other, which is as much as can be said of others who draw the line strictly, and jump over it to and fro, hither and thither, knowingly. You must know her. Here it was, sir, that the heroic Savage, his courageous heart thumping in his bosom, rescued a young lady, whom it is impossible he should ever deserve, out of the hands of a man who thought that desert went no way towards gaining a lady's favour. Follow me!" and so saying, he rushed up the passage with a loud halloo.

"Shall we go after him?" said Gregory. "For my part, I'm almost tired of the man, and of myself, for this night. Let us leave him. He is known here, I dare say, and will be taken care of."

"I am not so sure of that," said I; "the persons they do know are those with whom they use the greater liberty. No, no, we won't desert him; he has money about him, so rare a case, that he'll be telling everybody he sees of it,

and before morning, perhaps, may have an opposite story to tell."

To say the truth, although I desired to see Merchant safely to his lodgings, the long walk had rendered me thirsty, and knowing that the woman of the house had less reason to wish to see me than I had to be seen of her, I was disposed to enter the house, and to wear away the worst hours of the night quietly in the coffee-room.

Accordingly, I took Gregory's arm, and led him towards the house. Merchant had thrust himself into the landlady's room, and when we got into the passage was expostulating with her.

"Mrs. Edersby," said he, "or, I should say, Mistress Ancient Iniquity, for to that name art thou thenceforth to prick up thy ears, thou who wouldst not do a grain of good, though Satan himself, thy master, were to tempt thee to do it; I tell you, my friends here, and I, gentlemen of figure, and, what is more to the purpose, with purses through which the gold looks clinquant, must have a room to ourselves, with fire, with candles, and with punch."

"I know you very well, Mr. Merchant," said the woman, "and how you talk when you're not quite yourself, as you may be now. Bid your friends walk this way for a few minutes; the company in the coffee-room will be going presently, and then you can have it, nice, all to yourselves, and as long as you please."

"How!" cried Merchant, seizing a chair, and directing a blow at the woman with it, which she evaded with commendable dexterity, "how's that? Do you dare to trifle with me?"

"This is what it is," cried the woman in a rage, "if you come here to make a disturbance, out you shall pack, you and your friends, in a twinkling. If you mean to act like a gentleman, and want a bowl of punch, wait here for five minutes, and the room will be at your service."

"*We* wait!" exclaimed Merchant, reeling out of the room, "while half a dozen fellows club their wretched sixpences towards a reckoning which they can't pay. They'll sit boggling there all night, thrusting their hands into

their pockets, as though they expected to find something in 'em. Take the best wig among 'em in lieu of shot, and turn 'em out. Come, let's have a brush at these tarriers."

With that he broke from the woman's hold which she had fastened upon his coat, and proceeded hastily to the door of the coffee-room, which he threw open with considerable violence.

"Go your ways," said Mrs. Edersby, maliciously, "if you don't get your head broken, my head's not on my shoulders, that's all. You had best follow your friend, gentlemen, and see that no harm comes to him."

That we were already in motion to do. On entering the room, we discovered Merchant standing with his back to the fire, which was opposite the door, his arms akimbo, which supported the skirts of his coat. His eyes were directed obliquely towards a company at the other end of the room, and his lips were apart with a smile, disclosing his clenched teeth. The whole expression of his countenance was that of extreme and provoking contempt for the persons at whom he continued to gaze.

On our first entrance into the room, Gregory and I had turned to the left, concluding from the partial darkness in that quarter, that that portion of it was unoccupied, as indeed was the case.

"Come, Merchant," said Gregory, calling to him, when we had taken our seats. "Come this way, man. Shall we order a bowl of punch?"

"Come *this* way," he returned, beckoning us towards him, but still with his impudent stare upon the company, "and having seen whom we have got here, order what you please: only take care to order some asafœtida along with it to purify the room."

"I suspect Merchant will get his nose slit," whispered Gregory to me; "don't go near him. We can the better assist him, if we take no part with him, should he get into trouble."

Moved by curiosity, however (the place, as well as Merchant's speech had awakened it), I arose. What was

my astonishment when, glancing at the company, I observed Sinclair and Lemery a portion of it!

And here, to make what follows the easier intelligible, I must mention, from my after knowledge, of whom the party consisted. There were Sinclair and Lemery, and a brother of the latter, whose wife, a strong masculine woman, was seated by the side of Sinclair, and a huge ferocious ruffian, well dressed, however, to whose ill-favoured aspect a broken nose added an expression of extreme pugnacity.

Sinclair recognised me in an instant, and turned pale. The colour presently returned to his face, and his eye encountered mine, and returned its wrath boldly.

"Mr. Sinclair," said Merchant, with a formal bow, "your most obedient. Mr. Lemery, your servant. Mr. Seth Lemery—yours. Madam, (how could I fail so egregiously of the polite point?) your faithful slave. Mr. Nuttal, when I next purpose to enjoy the diversions of the bear-garden, I shall be happy in your company."

Having said this, he burst into a loud derisive laugh, and tossed his hat into their empty punch-bowl.

Nuttal sprung out of his chair.

"By the soul of man, Mr. Sinclair, I don't know why I should put up with this fellow's insolence, if you are disposed to do so. You seem to know the other fellow. Who is he?"

"Get out of the way," cried Gregory, thrusting Merchant aside, and walking towards the table to Nuttal. "Hound! what do you mean by the other fellow? This gentleman is Mr. Savage, and my friend."

"I don't care who he is," returned Nuttal, laying back the cuffs of his coat. "You are all disposed for a quarrel, I can see. Sinclair, Lemery, Seth—we are enough, I should think, to kick these three blackguards out of the room; I've borne with Merchant's insolence before, but he shall have it now."

He was advancing, encouraged by the woman, Mrs. Lemery, with "That's right! that's a brave lad! kick the three rascals out!"—when Gregory fetched him such a blow

upon the face with the back of his open hand as for the moment staggered him.

"Back, fool!" cried Gregory. "Sinclair, whistle your dog off. Dick, keep an eye upon Sinclair, he looks mischievous. Where's Merchant?"

This was no time to satisfy ourselves as to the last point.

"By the soul of man! sir," cried Nuttal, drawing, "I'll have your heart's blood out of you for that."

Sinclair's sword also flamed forth.

"I am for you, sir," said he to me, "remember! I owe you one. Look to yourself."

"You lie, Sinclair, you owe me two. You have most need of caution. Look to *yourself*." My sword was out.

At this juncture, the brothers Lemery and the wife retreated into a corner of the room, setting up loud cries of "Murder!" cries that were taken up by Mrs. Edersby, the landlady, and another woman outside. A trampling over head—a hurrying along passages—a whirl of uproar and confusion.

Gregory swore a great oath.

"D—n you all; I'll have your swords. Give up your sword, you ugly face-making rascal," to Nuttal, "unless you wish to be laid by the heels in Bridewell."

"When it has done its work, not before," cried the fellow, flourishing his rapier like a broadsword. "I shall be through you, my gentleman, if you don't make haste to lug out."

In the mean time Sinclair had come from behind the table, and had advanced upon me.

"Base-born impostor," he said, running his sword along mine, (he was a skilful fencer, but knew not that I also was master of my weapon),—"base-born impostor, I have you now."

"Well-born blockhead, you *shall* have. Ha! ha! sir!"

Three or four men ran into the room at this instant.

"Swords out!" cried one; "playing at gentlemen, eh? Don't part 'em; fair play's a jewel, say I. The tall one, with his sword broken, 'll strangle old broken nose, I'm thinking. Go it—give it him."

Sinclair had made several passes at me, which I parried;

but out of no design, I confess it, of acting merely upon the defensive. It was sport to dally with him awhile. At length he made a desperate push at me, which I put aside so smartly, as caused him to swing round. Gregory, at that moment, rushing forward upon Nuttal, drove Sinclair's sword entirely from its guard. But before this, if it can be said to be before—the two actions being almost instantaneous—I had run him into the body.

Then arose such a hubbub—such a hellish noise, before, beside, behind, around, as it is as impossible to describe as it was terrible to hear, even to those who contributed to it. Be sure I was not one of these. Transfixed with horror, remorse, pity, I was "grown cool too late." That face—malicious, revengeful, grinning like a wild cat, the eyes a-start—life looking blood and death—in a moment—in a glimpse of time, as it were—how changed! "Oh!" from the very depth of the bosom—that one word told me, and all that heard it—and who, spite of the cursed clamour, that did not hear it?—that he had got his death. The muscles of the face relaxed, and of the body; the jaw fell, the darkening lids sank upon the eyes, the stony whiteness overspread the face and lips—he fell upon the floor as only a dying man can fall.

Mrs. Lemery was the first to run towards him. "The dear Sinclair is killed—murdered!" she shrieked, tearing off her head-dress, and falling upon her knees by his side. "Mrs. Edersby! Mrs. Edersby!—Mrs. Rock! Mrs. Rock! why don't you all get from him?—let him have air."

"My house will be ruined!—oh Lord!—oh Lord!" cried Mrs. Edersby, wringing her hands. "Mrs. Rock, go to the gentleman!—you have better courage than I, and have been used to these things."

"No blood flows," said Mrs. Lemery. "Dear Sinclair!—Sinclair! I say—speak—only speak to poor Harriet."

"Does no blood flow?" said the woman who was called Mrs. Rock; "let me come to him," pushing her way through the crowd.

In a moment she was by his side, and had torn open his dress. She examined the wound. "Oh, my good God!

but I know it's of no use." At these words she stooped her head, and applying her lips to the wound, attempted to draw it, but, as it seemed, in vain. "No blood will come," she said, at length. "Why don't some one run for the doctor? Edersby, get some of the men to help Mr. Sinclair to bed. Run for the doctor—you!" to Gregory.

He did not move. For the first time, since swords had been drawn, I saw him; he was deadly pale.

"A bad night's business, Savage," said he. "Let us hope we may get fairly through it;—*fairly*—for these devils and that fellow, whom I've pretty well pummelled," pointing to Nuttal, who was clearing the blood from his swollen face, "will swear hard against us."

"Which is the fellow that first began the quarrel?" cried Mrs. Rock.

"It was Mr. Merchant," said Lemery; "he ran out of the room when he saw the swords out."

"A gentleman ran against us in the passage, as we came in," said one of the men; "but this shorter gentleman in black," pointing to me, "was the person who stabbed Mr. Sinclair."

Mrs. Rock turned her face towards me, and saw me. The head of Sinclair dropped from between her hands, which she smote together in triumph:—"D—n you!" she exclaimed, rising, "you know me, and I you."

Mrs. Ludlow! The wretch I had not seen for years, and whom I had imagined howling for her filthy sins long ago. A cold sweat came upon me when I beheld her, and my knees knocked together. The avenging fury! sublime she almost seemed, as she arose from the floor, like a she-fiend conjured out of hell to drag me thither!

She flew upon me, and endeavoured to pull me to the ground. "I'll hold him fast, he shan't escape!" with awful oaths, such only as her tribe are accustomed to utter. "Watch! watch—run for the watch, good people! —Murder! murder! murder!"

"Murder!—murder!" was echoed on every side, the women's voices prevalent over all, making a mad and hideous uproar.

What was I to do with the tenacious, clinging, strenuous creature, blinking and mouthing, her cursed face pushed close into mine? I knew not what I did. I threw out one spread hand, and caught her by the throat, and cutting her on the head with my sword, flung her, like a loathsome reptile, from me.

The yells redoubled. "Fly for your life," cried two of the men, seizing me by the arms, and pushing me towards the door. "Never mind your hat and wig. They've gone for the watch by the back way. You've done Mother Rock's business."

"Where's Gregory?—Gregory!"

"Never mind him—look to yourself. He's all safe. He didn't stab the man. Away with you;" and they thrust me from the door.

Seized with panic, for I feared I had killed Mrs. Ludlow also, I ran down the long passage, and out of the place, and crossing the Strand, fled up a court. All was darkness there; that was well—not so, however, when I discovered that there was no outlet at the further end.

"Hist! Savage, is that you?" whispered a voice close to my ear.

I started round suddenly.

"It's only I—Good God of heaven! what! It's Merchant."

It was well for him that he had disclosed himself; such was the tumult of my spirits, I had run him through the body else.

"Heavenly Father! what's the matter?—how you tremble!" He trembled as violently while he spoke. "What have you done?"

"Killed Sinclair."

"Good Heaven!—they'll take us—they'll take us. We shall all be hanged. Oh! how came you to do it?"

I pushed him away. "They're coming! we can't escape.'

There was, indeed, a terrific hubbub in the street; men calling, rattles springing, cries of murder, windows thrown up, doors unlocking and unbolting in the very court.

I hastened down it, followed by Merchant clinging to me, and entreating me to bear witness that he had nothing to do with the quarrel.

We ran back again, Merchant with a loud cry of terror. We had been seen by the watch, who, accompanied by several soldiers, pursued us and made us their prisoners.

They dragged us into the street, where we beheld another body of the watch, with Gregory fast secured amongst them—pale, indeed, but perfectly calm and collected. His presence and example re-assured me, but had no effect upon Merchant, who whined most pitifully, calling all the powers to witness that he had left the coffee-house long before the quarrel began.

The evidence of the Lemerys, and of Nuttal, which they loudly tendered, was not needed to prove the contrary.

We were forthwith conveyed—preceded and followed, and flanked on either side by a multitude of execrating ruffians, to the Gate-house in Westminster, where we were ushered into the presence of the constable of the night, who, having taken down the charge against us, consigned us to several cells in a small paved yard.

"God bless you, old friend!" said Gregory to me, pressing my hand earnestly, before they separated us—"a dreadful thing; but we must go through it like brave fellows. You will, I know. That cur—Merchant!"

And here I shall be very brief. On the next morning, hand-cuffed, and strongly guarded, we were taken before three justices, who heard the evidence that Nuttal, the Lemerys, and Mrs. Edersby had to offer, in which I could not but observe a slight discrepance, which evinced that they had not, as yet, laid their heads together to be in one story, or that they were not yet so perfect in their parts as to be able to make it cohere so exactly as the lover of strict and consentaneous evidence might approve. Mrs. Ludlow was not in a fit state, at present, to appear; but the wound on her head was not dangerous, and it had been dressed; and there was every probability that on the morrow she would be forthcoming.

In answer to a question from one of the justices, Mrs.

Edersby stated that Sinclair was not yet dead, but that the doctor held out no hope of his recovery.

Having heard all that could be urged against us, the justices remanded us till the following morning, and we were taken back to the Gate-house; and in the evening were told by the constable, who had charge of us, that Sinclair was dead.

On our re-examination, Mrs. Ludlow and the doctor were present. If the several statements of Nuttal and the rest, on the previous day, did not hang together on parallel lines, still less did the evidence eagerly furnished by Mrs. Ludlow—Mrs. Rock, as she was called—agree with theirs. Her story was, however, rendered plausible by what was elicited from the doctor on his examination.

He said that, finding there was not the slightest hope of saving Mr. Sinclair, he had considered it as a duty on his part to tell him so, and to remind him that, if he had anything to say touching the quarrel, it was his duty to say it at once. The doctor repeated, that he had warned Sinclair that he was a dying man, and had adjured him, as one who was about to meet his Maker, to state the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. He had taken down his words.

Sinclair, it seems, related pretty exactly the conduct of Merchant which had led to the quarrel; but he asserted that Gregory and I had encouraged him in it—that I was the first to draw, and that while Gregory was engaged with Nuttal I had rushed upon him (Sinclair) unawares, and before his sword was well out of his sheath had stabbed him. He added, that no amount of provocation would have induced him to use his sword in a tavern brawl, except absolutely compelled in self-defence to do so.

In partial confirmation of the solemn asseveration of the dying man, the doctor said that, in his opinion and to the best of his judgment, no man could have received such a wound (and he described it) as had caused the death of Sinclair, when he stood in a posture of self-defence, unless he had been a left-handed man.

Upon this evidence we were committed to Newgate, whither we were forthwith conveyed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN WHICH THE HERO OF THIS HISTORY, AND HIS TWO COMPANIONS, HOLD UP THEIR HANDS AT THE OLD BAILEY; AND WHEREIN IT WILL BE SEEN THAT ALL CRIMINALS ARE NOT PRISONERS IN NEWGATE.

HOPE, thou golden-winged angel! whether laid by with thieves and outcasts among the ashes of a glass-house—stretched on a bulk by a beggar's side—seated familiarly on a bench, cheek by jowl with a branded ruffian, or solitary and fettered in the murderer's cell—still never didst thou desert me! Thy wings winnowed the noisome air—thy charming hand smote softness into the stony pallet—thy whispering voice spoke comfort to a heart that, sustained by thee, cared not if the stone were very stone—hewn out of Prometheus' rock.

When we were first taken to the Gate-house, and consigned to our several cells, such was the disturbance in my mind, such the confusion of the past scene within it, that there was no room for the entertainment of hope, or for the admittance of fear.

The paved yard was set round with similar cells. Of these all, or nearly all, were occupied; some by fellows who clamorously complained against the abuse of power that had placed them there; others by penitent or fear-begnawn rogues, who as loudly lamented their unhappy condition; others by gentlemen who had met Justice face to face so often, or who had so little care about seeing her, that they wore out the time till she held her levee, with merry songs and catches.

Even amid this association of discordant noises I slept soundly—a sleep, however, worse than wakeful thoughts had been. The shrieking Ludlow, alive and mad again—the wildly laughing Mrs. Brett—the accursed and cursing Mrs. Rock—Sinclair, stony-eyed, with a face of stone—not falling, lapsing—disjointed, as it were, to the floor—

these sounds and sights ran through my ears, grew upon my eyes, till silence waked me, and the grey, sullen, heavy morning looked through the small aperture in the door of my cell, and bade me arise, chilled, and with a consciousness that stayed my blood in its current. What a relief to be dragged (as we were, with great rudeness and unnecessary violence) before the three justices, who heard the charge against us with a solemn indifference of mien that greatly fortified the courage of Merchant, who listened to the suggestions of hope as readily as he obeyed the impulse of fear, and who mistook the composure of the justices, which was the result of a long-accustomed intimacy with similar cases, for a belief on their parts that our particular case was no more than an ordinary tavern brawl, which would be visited with a light and transient punishment.

Before we were remanded, Gregory solicited and obtained leave to send to an attorney, a friend of his father. On the arrival of this gentleman at the Gate-house, we laid our case fully before him, and craved his professional advice and assistance. He did not appear to consider it as a very grave legal offence; on the contrary, he bade us be of good cheer, telling us there was nothing in the evidence (an opinion in which he persisted after we were committed to Newgate) that would warrant a grand jury in finding a true bill against us for murder. He reminded us of Major Oneby's case, which had been tried a year and a half before, and which was of a much more aggravated description than ours; yet such was the doubt in the minds of the jury, as to the proof of malice, (although malice had been demonstrated to a moral certainty,) that a special verdict was agreed to, on an elaborate argument upon which, and a laboured decision by all the judges, the Major, after the interval of a year, was at length convicted.

Merchant shuddered when he heard the Major cited. "He was convicted at last, Mr. French, that's small consolation. I remember he destroyed himself to escape hanging," looking at us piteously, "he bled to death after cutting the main artery of his arm. How much better that is than hanging, it were hard to determine."

"I cited Oneby's case," said French, "that you might perceive how loth juries are to convict in cases of this description. The case of you three gentlemen is of a very mitigated character."

He presently left us to seek out the men who had witnessed the affray, and to rake up such evidence against the characters of Nuttal, Mrs. Edersby, and the rest, as would weaken the effect of their testimony against us. He promised, at the same time, to break the particulars of the calamity that had befallen him, to Gregory's father, and to his intended father-in-law, Mr. Myte, who, Gregory assured himself, would set his wits to work, and his legs in motion to serve us by every means in his power.

We were very tenderly removed to Newgate by the constables, who, before our examination, and up to its conclusion, had treated us with great rigour, and who demanded a gratuity from us, on the plea of a gentle execution of their office; "considering," as they said, "that they did not know but that we were common bloods and bullies. They knew the difference, they hoped, between gentlemen who happened to kill a gentleman in a fair way, and such sneaking cowardly rogues as those; and they wished us well through it with all their hearts. They loved gentlemen of spirit and fire."

At Newgate a more humane treatment awaited us. We were placed apart from the common criminals, and confined in the press yard with others in like circumstances to ourselves, that is to say, with persons who had not yet stood their trial. With these, Merchant soon made himself familiar; and speedily attained to a confident assurance, that whatever fate might await Gregory and myself, he, at all events, would not participate in it. Not the least disgusting part of his conduct was the frequent reference he made to the unhappy event that had brought us here, and the consolation he drew from the circumstance of his having no sword upon the occasion, and from his cowardly withdrawal of himself before swords were crossed.

In the meantime, Mr. French visited us, and let us know that the coroner's jury had brought in a verdict of man-

slaughter against us; and this, after hearing the witnesses, who had made a much worse case than they had presented to the justices. He argued from thence that the grand jury could not find a true bill against us for murder. But French was altogether mistaken; for they not only did find a true bill against Gregory and me, but against Merchant, also, to whom the attorney, on his credit as a lawyer, had promised a speedy discharge. French, at the same time, informed Gregory that his father, petrified with horror, when the calamity which had befallen his son was first made known to him, had afterwards flown into a tumult of rage, declaring that he might rot in a jail, or perish at Tyburn before he would lift a finger or lay out a shilling on his behalf; and that Mr. Myte, when the lawyer acquainted him with the business that had brought him to the little man, had made as though he would run out of the room; but presently returning said, with upraised hands and eyes upon the ceiling, "What an escape for my girl! She might have been a hempen widow. Oh Lord! oh Lord! No, sir," addressing French, "no man can be more grieved than I am at the misfortune that has fallen upon Mr. Gregory and Mr. Savage,—but Lord bless you, sir, they're not of my stock. What can I do for them? What says old Greg?" French told him.

"There's an unnatural old rogue!" cried Myte, "he thinks that fatherly severity now, I warrant him. Urge him to fly to his son, sir; but as for me! What a look would it have, were I to move in the business—to go and see these poor dear young fools, to say a word, even, in their favour. 'There's Daniel Myte applauds brawlers and murderers; I always thought he loved fellows who could tilt with the rapier. He has a blood-thirsty look, now I come to think upon it.' That would be the cry of the throat-lifters. No. I thank you, good Mr. French. My service to the young fellows—I wish 'em well; but I can't part with my character, bad as it is."

Gregory was greatly distressed by the cold-heartedness of Myte. For the anger of his father he was in some measure prepared. It was an outbreak, that while it renounced, dis-

closed affection; but that Myte should have refused to visit us in our affliction—that he should have contented himself with a matter-of-course wish for our welfare, that had already been expressed as warmly and probably with as much sincerity by the very constables of the Gate-house, this deeply moved my poor friend, who had a warm heart, uninformed, as yet, by adversity, and who did not know of what material some hearts that are carried about by human beings, are made; above all, who had, with a kind of inverted sagacity, given Myte credit for extraordinary humanity, out of a conviction that no man without a more than ordinary portion of that quality, and with the acuteness and penetration that undoubtedly belonged to Myte, could permit himself to talk so callously as he did sometimes, unless it were simply his humour to do so.

"Let us say no more of him," said he; and, indeed, he had exhausted the subject; "but, O my God! Dick, what most troubles me is the affliction I have brought upon my dear girl, which will be increased ten-fold by the cruel indifference of her old scoundrel of a father. My poor Martha!" The tears started to his eyes, but he brushed them thence hastily. My soul was of sterner stuff, or it, too, had melted. I had received a letter from Elizabeth on that very day. It spoke of hope—it enjoined resignation till the day of trial—it counselled prayer meanwhile. It told of happier days to come—of her assurance of my innocence, and of my consequent honourable acquittal. It bade me be cheerful under my afflictions, and to rely upon her love, which would never, in any case, suffer diminution. It was impossible, she said, that any thing could make her love me less; if aught could make her love me more, my misfortunes alone could do so. She implored me to be calm as she was, and to hope as she did. Sweet creature! who was born, surely, to show us what human nature had been, if Eve had been untempted, or had withstood temptation. And yet the poor artifice of this dear letter! Hope—hope so many times repeated—so fearfully dwelt upon. Calmness dictated with a shaking hand, and in an almost illegible scrawl—the paper blurred and blistered with tears.

It was this that made me calm, that encouraged hope: that which troubled Gregory was my solace. He had gone to his death, his heart rent in twain by the thought that he left one behind who loved him better than life; I had died happy, to know that I was so greatly beloved.

We were surprised, on the following day, by a visit from Burridge. He accosted us very gravely.

"And so, gentlemen," said he, "you have killed, between you, your old school-fellow and friend. What may a plain man think of this, who never carried a sword but to use it in self-defence? Oh, Richard Savage! Oh, Thomas Gregory!"

"My dear sir——" began Gregory. I stopped him.

"Had Sinclair done so, Mr. Burridge," said I, "he had lived, and might, perhaps, have continued to listen to your exhortations with patience, which, I confess, I shall hardly do, if you come here to insult without provocation, or to condemn without knowledge."

"Do I deserve this?" said he, turning to Gregory, "*you* know, I cannot. Mr. Savage, I remember I once asked you in jest never to proclaim yourself my pupil—I hope you will not give me cause to make that request in earnest."

"In our condition, dear sir," said Gregory, "much may be forgiven. We are wrongfully charged with a heinous crime; and when our best friends doubt us, may we not stand excused?"

"Ah, well! say no more," cried the old man, taking us by the hand, "perhaps I was too hasty. The poor lad's dreadful death has troubled me, as the death of one of you had done. Cannot we sit down here? I want to talk awhile with you. You will now, young men," said he, when we had retired to a less crowded part of the yard, "have it in your power to separate your real from your nominal friends. Minerva is a haunter of prisons; wisdom is to be found without much seeking here. I am very sorry to say that Mr. Myte, whom I have called upon on your account, is one of your nominal friends. His son-in-law, Mr. Langley, however, is concerned for you, and will come to see you. I have a letter for you, Gregory, from a

real friend. Put it up. It may be read at any time. You may know what it contains, without looking into it."

Poor Gregory looked upon the superscription, and turned very pale. He pressed the letter to his lips, and presently committed it to his bosom.

"I thought she, at least, would not desert me," he murmured.

"You thought rightly," said Burridge; "you may be pretty certain, lads, that women won't desert you in the time of trouble. Men have not yet taught 'em that base trick of theirs. But, come, you must give me, each, a list of your friends. We shall need all their best words in your favour, for your attorney tells me the rogues will swear hard against you."

He now inquired whether it was chance alone that had carried us to Robinson's coffee-house, "For Lemery, one of the fellows, tells me," said he, "that Mr. Merchant knew Sinclair had returned from Scotland, and might have been pretty certain of lighting upon him at that place. Lemery says, he himself informed Merchant that it was Sinclair's usual haunt after midnight."

Upon hearing this, I beckoned Merchant towards us. He acknowledged that he knew Sinclair was in town; and confessed he was aware Robinson's was his common resort. He said it was possible he might have taken us there with a view of setting us together by the ears; "For what will not drunken men do?" said he; but he did not recollect whether he had such a design; "For what do drunken men remember?" Burridge shrugged his shoulders. "Lemery says he means to swear to the truth; for he has, it seems, a great respect for you, Dick. I hope he may show some respect to the truth; but he tells me there is one Mrs. Rock who is inveterately malignant against you."

"I believe she is, although I never gave her cause to be so," said I. "Mrs. Ludlow, sir." Burridge was lost in astonishment. His surprise was, if not increased, prolonged, when I related all that had passed between Sinclair and me on a former occasion at Robinson's—a recital with which I had hitherto forborne to trouble him.

"It seems," he said, when I had concluded, "as though that mother of yours were ordained to be directly or indirectly an agent in all your misfortunes. Surely now, if ever, she will relent. I will wait upon her once more. I had an affection for Brett, and she, I am told, loved him. Who knows but this terrible adventure may have softened her heart towards you, or that the preservation of her ward (Oh, Sinclair! Sinclair!) may have already done so. I cannot believe what you seem to hint, that she was privy to the horrible design."

"My mother and I are the antipodes of each other," said I bitterly. "When the light shall shine into her bosom all will be darkness here," pointing to my own. "No, sir, she will not relent."

Burridge, however, was of a contrary opinion, and went away on his errand of benevolence, promising to see us again before the day of trial.

Whatever hopes we might have entertained of the issue of our trial, were well nigh swept away by the intimation made to us the day before, that Justice Page was to preside at it. This base animal, like Jeffries (for he was a whelp of the same kennel), is now beyond the reach of infamy, nor can any goads of mine stimulate that hell-hound to a louder yelp over his grave than pursued him while living. He is dead; but not with him died, or shall die his shame. "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum*," — methinks I hear the squeamish canters squeak the wretched maxim — knaves who indulge the hope that, when the mattock and spade have dug their holes—when their base skulls lie, drawn of their iniquity, in the grave—the deeds they shall have done, that set their pebble eyes a-sparkle, whilst the widows' and the orphans' eyes dropt tears and their hearts blood—that made forlorn and bankrupt age to wring its wretched hands, whilst their well-pleased paws chafed warmth each into the other—their inhuman deeds shall be forgotten. O hope indulged in vain! if, indeed, any knave can be fool enough to hope such an exemption. Human justice, Christian charity, cannot grant it—or if they could, and did, the world's malice would not sanction it.

Page, like his betters, left his character behind him, which was this:—He was a gross, facetious dog, but only towards misfortune and misery. The calamitous were sure of his scornful jeer, his evil eye, his malignant heart. He wielded the law, not as a sword to punish the wicked, but as a dagger to stab the innocent. I will not say that he ever relaxed the law to favour the guilty, unless he were bribed to do it—but I do not think that even a bribe would have withheld him from straining it to convict an innocent man. He had his pleasures, forsooth, and studied them; and innocence on the gibbet was a luxury not to be resisted. Let no man say, because he knew not Page, that this character is overdrawn. But I suppose I must do him justice. I have said he loved his pleasures; and I love my own too well not to make due allowance for the frailty of others on that score. I believe, in my case, he had at once the opportunity of earning a bribe, which was a great pleasure, and of gratifying his hatred against an innocent man, which was a greater.

The morning of our trial arrived. We were led into the court, guarded by constables. Gregory had maintained from the first a decent manliness, which did not now desert him. I was firm and composed; but Merchant was by no means present to himself. A more abject spectacle of cowardly weakness never held up his head, or attempted to do it, at the bar. His appearance excited pity amongst the women, of whom there were many, and from the men provoked contempt. The court was crowded.

The indictment was laid against Thomas Gregory, Richard Savage, and William Merchant; and in that order we were placed at the bar.

Whilst Merchant's arraignment was proceeding, I had leisure to observe the countenance of Sir Arthur Page. I thought I could perceive in his devilish face—but this might have been merely prejudice—that he had already resolved my destruction. There was, at least, a pleased expression in it, that disclosed the delight he took in the trial of cases that contained blood in them. I never saw such a horrible, leering, vital villain. Had his father made

him any thing but a lawyer, he had been hanged to a certainty.

The counsellor for the prosecution, who stated his case as fairly as a lawyer could—for I defy a lawyer to state any case, whether legal or otherwise, quite fairly—having closed his speech, Nuttal was called, as the first witness. Mr. Nuttal tendered his evidence with an air of candour that recommended him to the attention of the court. He detailed the insult that had been offered by Merchant, which, he said, I drew on the instant to justify; that Gregory, then, with an oath, drawing, commanded Sinclair and himself to give up their swords, which they had not unsheathed; but that when he was about to do so, and, as he supposed, Sinclair, Gregory flew upon and would have killed him, but that he seized him by the wrist with one hand, and snapped his sword in two with the other; and that while the struggle was going on between them, he saw me stab Sinclair, who held his point towards the ground.

Lemery and his brother were in one story, which differed slightly from Nuttal's evidence. They acknowledged that Gregory did not demand the swords till Nuttal's was drawn, and that I did not draw until after Sinclair had put himself in attitude. They said further, that they did not see the wound given.

Mrs. Seth Lemery, her husband and brother-in-law, having seen too little, saw too much. She deposed that Gregory struck Sinclair's sword out of his hand, and that I stabbed him when he was disarmed.

I was astonished at hearing the hideous Mrs. Edersby speak the truth. She had not witnessed the brawl, she said, and therefore did not know by whom the wound had been given. She had supposed it must be Merchant, from his conduct towards her before the prisoners entered the coffee-room, and from his rushing past her in the passage immediately after she heard the clashing of swords. She had been since informed, however, that Mr. Merchant wore no sword on the occasion.

When Mrs. Rock was put into the witness-box, the thronged audience, who had listened to the evidence with

breathless attention, re-arranged themselves in their seats, such, I mean, of them as had obtained a sitting, whilst the crowd on the floor of the court, on either side, pressed still more anxiously forward. Even Page seemed to interest himself in the appearance of this woman.

Her face was pale to ghastliness, her lips livid, her teeth dull and chalky, her eyes dim, and deep-set in their sockets; but there was a clamorous loudness in her voice, and an energy in her gestures when she answered the questions that were addressed to her, which accorded so strangely with her emaciated face and person as to render her a spectacle to shudder at.

She had once said she would like to see me hanged by the neck. I know not whether, on my trial, she remembered the expression of the wish; it was too evident that the desire was as strong as ever. But poor stupid woman! her hate outleapt her discretion; or, perhaps, she had done better if she had had her malice only to gratify. Her perjuries were too gross even for Page, who was lenient towards false swearers. She stood convicted, not only out of her own mouth, but out of the mouths of her friends who had preceded her. Her evidence, which referred solely to me (she had not seen the scuffle between Gregory and Nuttal) was given, at first, with a loud confidence—"That was the man that stabbed him, before he had drawn his sword,"—with a bold finger shot towards me, and a shake of the head, as much as to say, "and he knows I speak the truth,"—and a look towards me at the same time that said —"You know I lie, but I'll hang you, if I can;" at first it was all this; but, as she proceeded, and became involved in a mesh of contradictory statements,—more hopeless of extrication every moment, the wretch absolutely was embarrassed—ashamed—confused;—the colour vanished from her face, leaving a heavy dew upon her forehead;—she clutched the rail or she had fallen senseless to the earth, and as she did so, cast a glance upon me—even upon me! —of the most abject debasement, of the most deplorable prostration. I wish never to see so sickening a sight again. I averted my eyes from her, as amid the muttered exe-

crations, scoffs and jeers of the audience, she left, or was carried out of the court. I believe she was helped out. The next and last witness against us was the doctor who attended Sinclair in his last moments. I forget his name, nor is it of importance.

He recapitulated his evidence, given before the justices; stating that, from the nature of the wound, and from the direction the sword had taken, he could not conceive how a man, standing upon his defence, could have received such an injury, unless he had fenced with the left hand.

The case for the prosecution being closed, a moment's pause ensued. Gregory nudged me with his elbow.

"Savage," said he, not looking at me, and in a low voice between his set teeth—"there is a woman in a hood—a lady, on the other side of the court, has been gazing at us—at you more particularly, ever since we stood here. Her eyes make me quite sick. Avert your head from her. My God! such an expression!"

"Mrs. Brett, no doubt," said I. "I thought we should have her company here."

"Gracious Heaven," and he turned very pale, "support yourself, my dear fellow," grasping my hand; "go through it like a hero. I pity you."

I needed not Gregory's pity. Whatever concern I might hitherto have felt, and did at that instant feel, at the unhappy fate of Sinclair, the knowledge that his friend and confederate was by, watching, perhaps heartening, animating the base gang in their efforts to destroy me, at once dissipated it. She supplied another motive to me to carry myself with spirit and dignity. The unfortunate may sometimes break down under the sense of their misfortunes; but the persecuted are mostly strengthened by the oppressor, and do not fall, but are stricken down.

Gregory was now called upon for his defence. He was very brief, giving a plain statement of as much as had occurred in the coffee-room, as his active share in the quarrel had enabled him to observe. He submitted, that testimony so various and in some points so contradictory as had been brought against us was not entitled to credit;

and that the characters of the men and women who had offered it were so infamous, that even had they preserved a consistence and integrity of evidence, it would not, or ought not, to weigh heavily against us.

My speech occupied a considerable time. Gregory was one of those men, who have an assured notion of the mightiness of truth; who hold that a plain tale stands in need of no laboured arguments to recommend it to the apprehensions, or to force its several points into the bosoms of unprejudiced men. But, not to urge that men, imme, diately they have heard one side of a story, can no longer be said to be unprejudiced, I knew full well that there is a natural repugnance in the mind of man to the reception of truth; that, whereas falsehood is taken greedily, as a child will swallow all manner of trash, truth is rejected, as a child sputters and wawls when physic is forced upon it. An affirmation suffices for the most part to a lie; a truth must have demonstration.

Accordingly having made my statements, I examined and sifted the evidence that had been tendered against us. I laboured, and I believe successfully, to show that, with the exception of the doctor's surmise, it was utterly unworthy of a moment's consideration. I explained how it came to pass that Sinclair received his wound on the left side of the body; by describing how Gregory's arm, sweeping in the direction of Nuttal, had caught Sinclair's sword-arm, and had swung him half round. But, I proceeded to contend that, even if the jury were to believe that portion of Nuttal's evidence (which, however, like the rest, was false), that asserted that I had stabbed Sinclair when his sword was held towards the ground, I was not in reason or justice bound to wait till a lunge was made at me, which might incapacitate me from returning it, and which had I so waited, and had it taken such an effect, would have caused Mr. Sinclair to stand where I then stood.

My speech lasted more than an hour, and was listened to by the jury with great attention. Page, who had interrupted Gregory two or three times during his short speech, did not venture upon the same indecency with

me. His eyes glistened, however, whilst I was pleading my right to have stabbed Sinclair, even though his sword had not been raised; and I was told afterwards by a gentleman of eminence as a lawyer, that I acted very imprudently in arguing that supposition. He said that the jury must inevitably have concluded from it, notwithstanding all that I had said previously, and in spite of all the evidence in my favour, that Sinclair had come by his death in that manner.

Merchant, by a motion of the head, intimated that he declined saying any thing; indeed, he subsequently informed me that his tongue was as dry, during the trial, as an old shoe, and that he believed, had he attempted to utter a word, he should have been choked.

The three men, who had run into the coffee-room during the affray, were then called. Their evidence varied but slightly. There was just so much discrepance in it, as it was natural to expect, and as was unavoidable, considering the hurry and tumult of the whole proceeding; and it supported our defence in all its main particulars.

It was next shown, on our behalf, that Nuttal was a fellow that hung loose upon society, that he was a man accustomed to violence and brawls, and that he had been heard to threaten that he would "do for us," if we escaped "this bout," and he could catch us alone. The Lemerys and the wife of Seth were proved to be disreputable creatures —the woman only less infamous than Mrs. Rock, and about on a par with Mrs. Edersby, by whom, it appeared, both were supported, although on a different footing, which I need not describe or explain. The house itself was well known.

Lastly, witnesses were called to our characters. The gentlemen who appeared on behalf of Gregory were, all of them, of the highest respectability; many of those who testified to mine were of no common distinction. Let me remember amongst them my friends, Mr. Wilks and Mr. Aaron Hill—Thomson and Mallet—Lord Tyrconnel and Major-General Churchill, the friend of Mrs. Oldfield. Langley and Burridge, our common friends, spoke in behalf

of us both jointly. Myte hung about the court, and was seen both by Gregory and me; but by no inducement could he be prevailed upon to enter the witness box. At length, tearing himself from Langley's detaining grasp, and drawing in a long breath, he rushed wildly out of the court.

When Page was about to sum up, a woman in the dress of a widow made her way to the witness box, and having been helped into it, after bestowing a low obeisance upon the judge, turned towards us, and smiling, though the tears rolled plentifully down her face, nodded encouragingly at Gregory and me. It was some time before I recognised her, but when at last I did, the spirit that had upheld me all along had well nigh deserted me. Had I not checked, on a sudden, a rebellious rising in my throat, my eyes had overflowed.

"Please your honourable worship," said poor simple Mrs. Martin, with a low curtsy; "I know the two young gentlemen yonder. The youngest of 'em—he was but a boy then—came to lodge with my good master and me (I wish he was alive and here—he could have told you better than I can); well, your worshipful lordship," curtsying again, "he was treated very barbarously by his lady-mother, one Madam Brett."

"What does the woman mean?" cried Page; "to what does this lead? What do you know of the prisoner? What have you to say in his favour?"

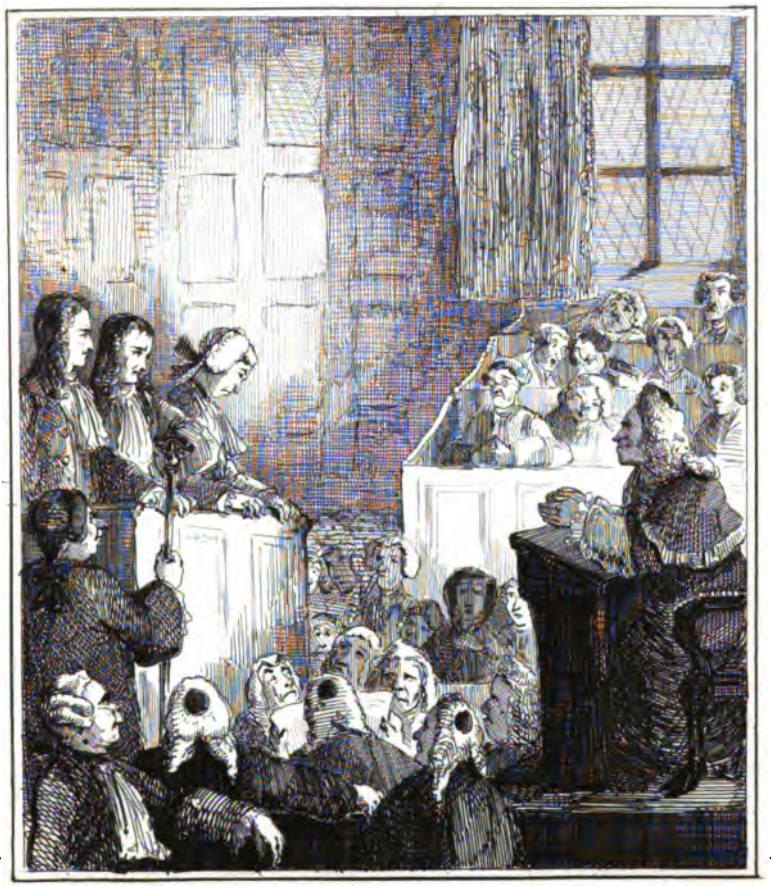
"I was coming to that, please your worship," cried Mrs. Martin. "She wanted to put him on board ship—to make away with him, like. Well, my master——"

"Stand down, woman," exclaimed Page, roughly; "we are not to be amused with these old wife's tales. Bid her stand down."

A constable laid his hand upon her arm. "You must stand down, missus."

She did not resist, but curtsying as before, went out of the box.

"I wouldn't speak falsely for the world, and all its worth," said she, appealing to the people about her; "but, gentlemen, I wanted to say this; I know the dear young



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London: Richard Bentley, [illegible] 1882

creature there, whose life's in the hands of God Almighty, not in no one's here, wouldn't kill a fly, much more a Christian, unless he had call to do it."

She now wiped her wet cheeks, endeavouring to get as near to us as she could, nodding at us, as though bidding us keep up our spirits.

The commotion caused by this little incident having subsided, Page proceeded to sum up the evidence against us, which he did with extraordinary unfairness and partiality. He remarked, that whatever difference there might have been, and was, in the depositions of the witnesses, it by no means amounted to inconsistency, and that it was easily explained by the suddenness and confusion with which the whole business had been carried on. He observed, further, that the difference itself was sufficient to satisfy the jury of the general truth of the testimony offered by those who had appeared against us. "If," said he, "their evidence had been one, it might reasonably be suspected that it was false; since it is impossible they could each have seen all; or granting that possibility, that they could have been sufficiently collected to have remembered it with such exactness as would justify you in giving implicit credit to it. They all agree, nor do the prisoners themselves deny it, that Merchant gave the first provocation. With regard to the witnesses they have called, their evidence can weigh but lightly with you, as they were not present till the murder, as I may say, was on its course. But, gentlemen of the jury," raising his voice, and casting a hideous leer first towards us, and then at the twelve fellows in the box, who having enjoyed his peculiar humour before, or having heard of his talent that way, relaxed their muscles and sat prepared to furnish a requiting grin; "but, gentlemen of the jury, this, I doubt not, all this is a very light matter to the prisoners at the bar, more especially to Mr. Savage, who, as you no doubt have perceived, has carried himself to-day, as though killing a gentleman were a very praiseworthy occupation of a gentleman's time. Must we not teach Mr. Savage a different lesson? Gentlemen of the jury, consider, I pray you,

that Mr. Savage is a very great man—oh! a great man, indeed—a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; remember that he wears laced clothes, much finer clothes than you or I—that he carries a sword, a very fine sword, which he knows how to use much better than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has plenty of money in his pocket—much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but——" here he paused, and laying forth his hands, opened his eyes to the full stretch and shrugged his shoulders appealingly, "but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not, after all, a hard case, a *very* hard case, that Mr. Savage should therefore kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?"

I cannot describe the rage, horror, and disgust with which I listened to the infamous harangue.

"Gentlemen of the jury," I called out, "this judge, whom you have just heard, appears to love his joke better than justice. This is not Smithfield, this is a court of law; nor ought we to suffer, because fortune has misplaced him. Mr. Page, when he seeks by these means to obtain a conviction against me for murder, is endeavouring to commit one. Gentlemen, you ought not to listen——"

"Silence, fellow," interrupted Page, all the irresponsible and licentious devil flaming forth out of his face. "Silence!" he roared, "take the fellow from the court—what! does he resist?—drag him away by force. What! what! what! —do you mark him, gentlemen of the jury?"

Three fellows laid hands upon me, and haled me out of the court, amid the murmurs of the spectators.

"You'll swing for this, master, I'm sorry to tell you," said one of the fellows. "Lord bless you! why did you break out so? It's only his way; he always plays with his fish before he kills 'em."

I was informed that during my absence Page thought fit to restrain his merriment, and to put on, with whatever difficulty, an air of decent gravity. He explained that characters, however good, were of no avail to the prisoner, when the evidence, as in this instance, was conclusive, although it might stand him in good stead when the

evidence was doubtful. He called upon the jury, therefore, for their verdict.

While the jury were deliberating, I was re-admitted, that I might hear the verdict pronounced. They were closeted more than an hour, and, on their return, found Gregory and me guilty of murder, and Merchant of manslaughter. The instant it was pronounced, a female figure, rising from her seat, uttered a piercing shriek, and went into strong convulsions. — My Elizabeth! — A crowd gathered about her to tender, as I suppose, assistance. There was but an instant; the gaolers had us by the arms, and were about to lead us out of the court. In the centre of it, and in the midst of a multitude pressing to leave—for the court had risen—I beheld Mrs. Brett. Her eyes encountered mine—such eyes! I wonder not they sickened Gregory to look upon them. A smile, too, upon her lip, that a stranger would have called irresistible, but of which I knew the deadly import, she knowing that I knew it.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE, THE PHILOSOPHER, IS TRANSFORMED IN A MOMENT INTO A VERY COMMON MAN. WITH SOME WORTHIER SPECIMENS OF HUMAN NATURE THAN WERE TO BE FOUND (SAVE ONE) IN THE FOREGOING CHAPTER.

THERE was an interval of four days between the trial and the passing of the sentence. These, if not the most miserable, were, assuredly, the most anxious of my life. On the conclusion of our trial, Gregory and myself were conducted back to prison, where we were closely confined, being consigned to separate cells, and loaded with irons.

If the partiality and injustice of Page had been instrumental to my conviction, there was this to thank him for, he had displayed both so openly, that, whilst his villainy provoked my indignation, and, therefore, sustained my spirits, it raised a not unreasonable impression that no sentence of death passed upon us by him could be carried into execution.

That sentence, however, was pronounced upon us by Page, when we were brought before him, after I had addressed the court in a short speech, in which, if I pleaded for an extension of mercy (there were other judges on the bench—to Page I had disdained to appeal), I did it in no unmanly or unbecoming way, and I take heaven to witness, more on my friend Gregory's account than on my own.

It was of no avail. We were returned to our cells with an intimation that we must prepare ourselves for an ignominious death, which we were to undergo within a fortnight. I must mention here, that Merchant was burnt in the hand, and discharged.

It is, perhaps, a happiness of my nature, and not one of my virtues, that I can bear afflictions—and I have had many to bear—not only with fortitude, but with serenity. It is true, my life, hitherto, had known its share of sorrow and disappointment; but for that very reason it was dear to me. In youth, in proportion to the present misery, is the expectation of future joy. Age were not so wise, shaking its head at the vanity of hope, only that it knows it cannot hold out till the fair day comes round; or if it can, that it will have no longer pulse or passion to enjoy it.

Be this as it may, I endeavoured to shake the old world from off me, and to mould my mind to a frame of becoming resignation to my fate. I confess, my chief desire, in the first instance, was to show the world that I could meet death face to face, with a gallant spirit. I acknowledge, with shame, that the next world was not very much in my thoughts, till it was recalled to me by the kindest letter ever written by one friend to another, which I received from Dr. Young, who had then recently entered into orders, and from whom I had experienced many acts of kindness, the last of which had been the introduction of me to the Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a lady whose goodness I shall never cease to reverence, whose generous nature shall have my admiration to the last, and this, in spite of a man whom I love and venerate as much as I can well do any man breathing, but whom (I take leave to say so) I love the less, and do not so entirely venerate, because of his ex-

traordinary, extravagant and pitiable attacks upon that lady.

Steele, if I remember, says in the Spectator, that consolation too early administered is the renewal of grief. It is true of consolation that hastens, treading on the heel of an affliction just past; but sympathy cannot come too soon when it is to strengthen us against a calamity that is about to befall us, and that we cannot escape. The letter of Young withdrew my thoughts—transferred my hopes from this world to the other—made me feel, what no exhortation except to one, in like circumstances, can ever make any man feel—for the truth is so trite as to be useless—the uncertainty of happiness in this life—its instability if it be attained—its worthlessness when it is secured.

This letter, and the Bible, to which it bore frequent reference, wrought a change within me; and beyond one pang of anguish constantly recurring when I thought of my Elizabeth, and which I had not been human (below, not above humanity), had I striven to assuage or to suppress, I felt that now, indeed, I could die like a man and a Christian.

In the meantime, our friends were using their best exertions to procure a pardon for us. Of these, none were more zealous or active than Burridge. The severity and brutality of Page were well known; their exercise in our case had been made public, and was openly commented upon and strongly condemned. The present King,* had only recently ascended the throne, and an appeal to Queen Caroline for her intercession in our behalf was resolved upon, and at length submitted to that august lady.

Our execution was stayed, while an inquiry into the particulars of our case was going on.

One morning Burridge obtained admittance to me, and after gazing at me for some time in silence, burst into tears. I was shocked beyond expression at the agitation of the old man, and begged of him, for Heaven's sake, to tell me what he had to say at once—

"'Worse than the worst, content,'" said I, with his favourite, Shakspeare. I said this, I believe, falteringly,

* George II.

for my health had suffered during my confinement, and my spirits had in some degree, deserted me, since Gregory's illness, under which he had languished more than three weeks. The brave fellow felt his father's cruelty and Myte's unkindness more deeply than the perilous circumstances of his own condition.

"'Worse than the worst, content,'" repeated Burridge, laying his hands upon my shoulders. "That is well said, my boy Dick; and 'worse than the worst,' have you now to bear. Prepare yourself to hear it."

"I know it, already. I am to die. The Queen's intercession has not been successful—has failed?"

A twitch in Burridge's face.

"I am bound to tell you, Richard Savage. Let me thank God that I am a Christian, and let me command you to remember that you are one.—The Queen will not interfere to save you! She said she could not think of interceding for a man who had once attempted the life of his mother. She has been told the wretched lie, that you once broke into Mrs. Brett's house, and endeavoured to murder her; and there is too much reason to believe, from the inquiries your friends and I have made, that your mother has caused this story to be conveyed to the Queen. Whether it be so or not, the Queen is inexorable."

I uttered a cry of horror, and dashed myself upon the ground.

"Oh, my God! Oh, my God! that I could weep—that I could but weep," I exclaimed. "Oh! that I were crushed out of the world at once—extinguished. Does such a wretch as I breathe in this world? No, no, no; it is no place for me. It is hell!—hell!"

"My good lad—my dear boy," said Burridge, soothingly, coming towards me, "this is so unlike you—be master of yourself. You knew that it was only a chance whether we succeeded or no. Come, you have often told me you were prepared for the worst. Collect yourself. Be a man!"

"I am one!" I exclaimed, starting up on one hand, and dashing my fist against my forehead; "it is because I am one, Burridge, that I feel this;—it is because I am one,

that I cannot bear it. What! am I a wild beast?—I may be; but I am caged—well, let me be butchered; I cannot escape it."

Such wild nonsense do people vent in paroxysms.

"You talk franticly, Richard," cried Burridge. "Smooth your countenance. Command yourself, I entreat; and let not your old master blush for you. What is this paltry breath, that we should repine at yielding it up? What is this life but a thing held on sufferance, to be restored, when God, who lent, demands it back?"

I had leaned my head upon his shoulder.

"Oh, sir," said I, bursting into a passion of tears—a convulsion, that, ere it relieved, tortured me to madness, "how have you mistaken my emotion. You shall not blush for your poor friend. Do you think I hold my life at a pebble's purchase—that I would not willingly yield this wretched incumbrance to my soul this very moment at Tyburn? What is it but my better reason which is now returned, but which deserted me just now, that withholds me from dashing my skull against this wall, or from beating out my brains with these irons? I hate my life!—and why? I'll tell you"—speaking short and thick, but rapidly—"my mother, that infernal—most infernal creature, gave it to me. I knew her hatred to me. I knew her malice—but I knew not—how could I know—for it is infinite—*all* her wickedness? Help me now to curse her," snatching his arm.

"Enough—I will not," cried Burridge. "She needs not the curse of man; she needs our prayers."

"All the prayers, Burridge, that ever thronged Heaven's gate, outnumbered, for her salvation, were useless. You are not a man;—you have no human resentment of wrongs—of my wrongs—if you do not curse her."

"You talk franticly, young man," said Burridge. "I shall leave you, till you are more yourself."

"Am I not calm?" I returned. "I wish to be so."

"That is well."

"You see that I am calm?"

"I do; and I am glad to see it."

"Then hear, Mr. Burridge, what I say calmly; what I say in the prospect of death: words that I could wish might live, when I am dead—and sting like serpents, when this body is the prey of worms. I curse her, sir, with all my heart—with all my soul, and with all my strength. May she live till death becomes to her at once a horror and a refuge—a horror that she cannot bear, a refuge that she dare not embrace;—and when she dies—but no, I pursue her no farther: then will her pnnishment and my revenge begin."

"You have said more than enough, O Richard Savage," cried Burridge, catching my clasped hands as they descended, "more than enough to peril your own soul. You serve her turn—wretch that you are! What! are you so well pleased that she shall destroy you in this world, that you must needs help her to destroy you in the next? This is not madness—it is stupidity. Sit down and think, if you can think, and recall your foolish speech. Have you done so?"

He had led me like a child to the stone bench. "You were ever hasty, Dick," he continued, after a pause; "but never malignant. It is gone, is it?"

"It is, sir,—and I am sorry. I was a fool."

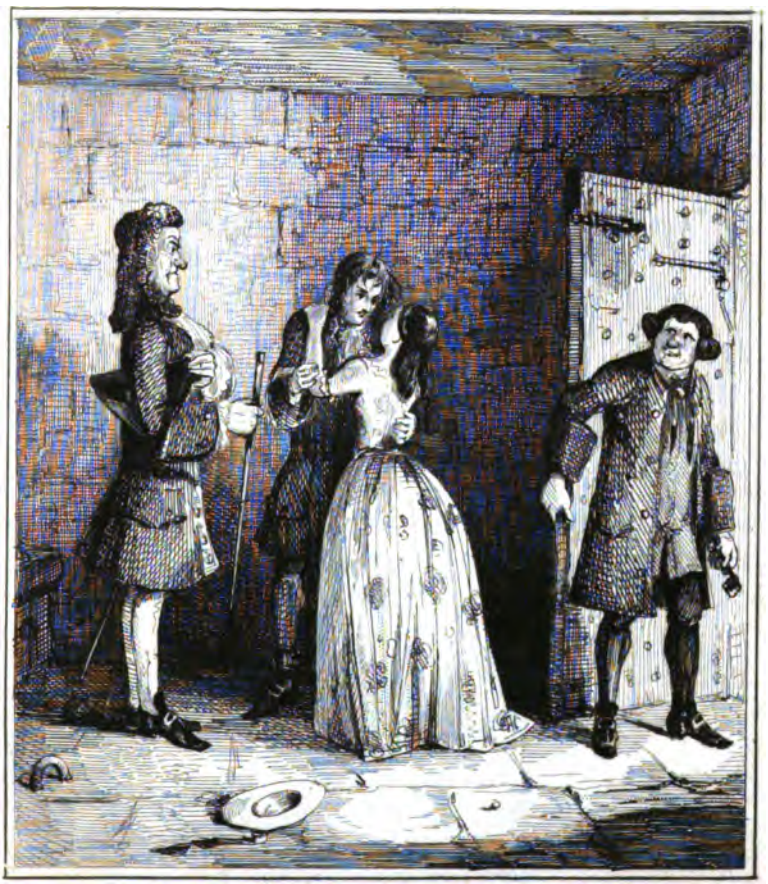
"Ah well!" said Burridge, "all men are fools who will not know how sure an avenger Time is, or knowing, will not await his hour. The Italians say, 'Justice has feet of lead, but iron hands.' The feet move slowly, but surely: the hands as sure—and but once."

At this moment the bolts were drawn back, and the key was turned in the door of my cell.

"My time is expired," said Burridge peevishly, "and I had many things to say to you. These gaolers execute their duty strictly. I will see you to-morrow. What! How's this?"

The door being opened, a lady, her face concealed by a veil, entered the cell hastily. Putting aside her veil, she flew towards me, and clasped me in her arms.

Elizabeth Wilfred—her eyes not dim, but sparkling through her tears—her lips with her own sweet smile upon



London: Richard Bentley & Son 1856

them—her face very pale, but exulting—suffused with a white radiance.

She could not speak for some moments; but drew me closer and closer to her bosom; her heart beating violently against mine.

"Dearest Richard," she said, at length, raising her eyes to mine, "I was too overpowered to speak, but I can now."

"Compose yourself, my love; let me lead you to this seat. You tremble." I was alarmed by her fluttering manner, and by a strange lightness in her eye.

"I tremble, but it is with joy," she replied, bursting into tears. "Forgive me; but I cannot help weeping—it will do me good. Richard, you are pardoned."

I directed my eyes to Burridge, who was standing apart. He shook his head, and put up his shoulders.

"Some one has cruelly deceived you, Elizabeth," said I.

"No—no—I had it from her own lips;—the Queen's own lips. The King has granted you and your friend a free pardon. Do not mind me," sinking on the stone bench and throwing herself back, when she gave vent to a violent fit of weeping, "I shall be well, now; but I cannot bear to see that wasted face, and those dreadful fetters."

"Get out of the way," cried Burridge, briskly pushing me aside, "hovering over the young lady like a bird of ill-omen. Don't you know it is the sight of you that affects her? Go away into yonder corner."

The old gentleman now seated himself by Elizabeth's side, and taking her tenderly round the waist, wiped her tears from her eyes with her handkerchief. "Dear madam," said he soothingly, "pray calm yourself. You afflict our unhappy friend Savage there—you do, indeed. Ah well! that sigh was the last, I am sure. That smile shows you're a good girl. Come, come—that's very well. Now, madam; pray don't be in haste to speak,—are you quite certain you are not deceived? Are you sure that Mr. Savage and his friend are pardoned?"

"Quite sure, sir. Richard," she motioned me to seat myself by her side, and taking my hand between herown, proceeded: "Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory will be admitted

to bail—I think that is the word—which we must procure at once, preparatory to their pleading the King's pardon." She turned to me. "You have the good countess to thank for this, who has interested herself for you, like a mother!"

"Like a mother!" cried Burridge, springing up, "ha! ha! no matter. I'll be one of their bail, and I'll soon get the others. What's the amount, my little love; but what does that signify? Does the keeper know of this? is the prison resonant with it? (what a word is that 'resonant' —I'm an old fool.) Have directions come down—or what the deuce do they call 'em—to the keeper of this gaol of Newgate, I wonder?"

"I told the man who admitted me, I believe," said Elizabeth; "but I did not wait to hear whether they were apprised of it."

"To be sure not, my dear madam," returned Burridge. "I'll away to Gregory's cell, and pluck the poor fellow out by the ears. You may well look amazed, Dick. I hope you will go down on your knees to-night, sir, and thank God for your deliverance. But tell me, before I go—who is this young lady—this angel? I must call you so, my dear, whether you like it or no."

"This young lady, sir," said I, "is Miss Elizabeth Wilfred, a daughter of Sir Richard Steele."

"A daughter of Sir Richard Steele!" cried Burridge, throwing up his hands, and then bringing them down gradually till they enclosed the face of Elizabeth between them; "let me look at you, my pretty one. And so you are, sure enough. The eye and the mouth are just his. Ah, well! God bless him! And won't you let an old friend of your father salute you, Miss Elizabeth?"

She lifted up her face to his.

"To be sure she will," cried Burridge, hugging her in his arms in a rapture, and kissing her rather more ardently than, upon any other occasion, I should altogether have approved; "and so you take an interest in this sorry fellow, do you?"

"I have a reason, a very strong reason," returned Elizabeth, blushing, "to be grateful to Mr. Savage, and to respect him."

Burridge gazed at her awhile earnestly, and in silence; and then, abruptly leaving her, drew out his handkerchief, and stalked to the other end of the cell, where he remained, as it seemed, staring at the wall.

"Such once," said he, in a low and tremulous voice, approaching me, and laying his hand upon my arm, "such once, as young and as beautiful—and as good—*and as good*, was she who lives here, in my heart, till I go down to my grave!—

> 'Oh, woman! lovely woman! nature made you,
> To temper man—we had been brutes without you:
> There's in you all that we believe of heaven,—
> Amazing brightness—'

"Fool!" checking himself suddenly; "this is no place, Dick, for the young creature. Whither, madam, shall I have the honour of conducting you?"

"I have a coach at the door," returned Elizabeth, "and was going to Mr. Myte's, to inform him and the young ladies of the happy event. Miss Martha, I am sure——"

"Will hasten back with you; ha, ha!" cried Burridge; "the sight of his mistress will do Gregory more good than all the doctors that ever pondered over pulse, or puzzled over prescription. We must get our friends into better quarters before you return, if money will do it (and I believe you may melt even a gaoler's heart with it). You will not be long, I dare say. Permit me, madam, to hand you to your coach."

Burridge returned in a few minutes, bringing Gregory with him, and followed by two fellows, who proceeded to knock off our irons. When that agreeable task was completed, we embraced one another cordially.

"I must leave you for a few minutes together," said Burridge, "while I go and take counsel with the keeper about more comfortable lodgings for you; for the man at the gate tells me that the bail cannot be perfected to-day."

"Burridge's tidings," cried Gregory, when the old gentleman had left us to ourselves, "have had a miraculous effect upon me. I thought I should have died in this hole before

I took a little fresh air on the road to Tyburn; and, fool that I was, imagined that, my father having so cruelly deserted me, I had nothing to wish for, and had no wish to live; but I find there are more eggs in the basket than I knew of. Burridge is going to the old gentleman to try to prevail upon him to be one of our bail, and to take me into his forgiveness. I hope he may succeed. It is now, for the first time, that I pity the unhappy fate of Sinclair."

"I began to do so before you," I replied; "and have left off before you have well begun. Surely the wretch, who with his dying breath could have forged a base lie to sacrifice us, is little worthy of pity."

"Walk this way, gentlemen," cried Burridge, "the keeper will give you possession of a comfortable apartment up stairs. Major Oneby, it seems, the last gentleman who occupied it, lived in it for a year, and found it very much to his mind. I mean that we shall make a day of it, when I have got our party together. I have ordered dinner, and plenty of wine. Benson, the keeper, tells me there has been more jollity in that room than in half the taverns in town. Its character must be kept up."

"I shall hardly help to do so," observed Gregory, who was yet very ill. "I fear, sir, I must retire to bed early."

"Pish!" said Burridge; "when a barber has been at you, and you've shifted yourself, you'll be another man."

The old gentleman was right. I suspect he had been acquainted with gaols in his earlier years, and knew very well how soon a prison fever is dispersed by the prospect of a speedy liberation from confinement. In less than an hour, a vast change was effected in the spirits and appearance both of Gregory and myself, and having taken possession of the room up stairs we awaited the coming of our friends, discoursing with something like gaiety, in the meanwhile, upon topics connected with the outward world, to which we had bidden adieu, but in which we were once more to show ourselves.

Elizabeth was the first to return, accompanied by Martha Myte and Langley. The overjoyed little creature was soon in the arms of Gregory; Elizabeth made the scene

more affecting by her tears; Langley looked rueful for a while, and then turned away to the window, whilst I felt a strong inclination to favour the company with a dance.

"I wish that mother of mine," thought I, "could see this sight." The wish was a drawback upon my present felicity; as indeed, all thoughts of that woman were certain of being, whenever they arose in my mind, or rather, whenever they descended upon it.

Langley shook us heartily by the hand, and congratulated us upon our good fortune. "How your pardon was brought about, however," said he, "we have yet to learn. Miss Wilfred will presently resolve the mystery. Mr. Myte would have been most happy to join Burridge in offering bail for you; but I insisted upon having that pleasure myself. He will be here in the evening."

"To say the truth," he added, drawing me aside, "I think Myte is almost ashamed to see you. You know he neither wants generosity nor virtue; but he is such an arrant slave to the world, and to the world's opinion, that he is not to be considered a free agent. He walks the slow, regular pace of conventional morality, because the world does so; and 'tis only when the world—as it will happen sometimes—deviates into a liberal canter, that he finds out what a d——d hobble the former was. His resentment against Page for his insolence and injustice on your trial is as great as ours, or that of all your friends can be; and his abhorrence of your mother in this, her last atrocity, as strong as might be wished, and as sincere; but I confess his resentment and abhorrence were not very strongly expressed till just now, when he learned that his Majesty had been pleased to extend a free pardon to you."

"Myte is like a pigeon," said I, "he never flies against the wind."

"As wise as a serpent," returned Langley; "as innocent as a dove."

Burridge now entered the room with Gregory's father.

His son did not at the moment observe him, being engaged in earnest conversation with his mistress, a want of dutiful attention, as the old gentleman appeared to consider

it, which irritated him not a little. He knocked his cane upon the ground two or three times, and hemmed very loud.

"Come here, my son Tom, and embrace me," said he. "You're a wicked sinner, you, Tom; but Mr. Burridge tells me I must forgive you. You don't know what you've made your poor old father suffer on your account. No sleep o' nights, and the asthma worse than ever."

The old man's sufferings had not caused him to fall away in the least, nor did his voice betray much emotion. He embraced his son very coolly and deliberately. "Why, you look very ill, Tom," he resumed. "You remind me of your dear good mother, who was spared this terrible trial, rest her soul! You think me right, don't you, sir," he added, turning to Burridge, "in what I have done? I ought to set my face against such wicked proceedings, oughtn't I? 'Thou shalt not kill,' say the Scriptures, and the laws must be obeyed—must be obeyed. But since the king has been pleased to pardon my son, it wouldn't be right, would it, Mr. Burridge, if I were not to pardon him likewise? I was always a loyal man—Heaven forbid that I should be thought otherwise."

Having made this speech, he looked round complacently upon the company. "You've said enough," cried Burridge, motioning the younger Gregory to be seated; "you are the best judge of your own actions, and of the motives to them; nobody is disposed to question either. Your son is saved, and will return to you without the smallest stain upon his reputation."

"Very good," cried old Gregory, "and I'm very glad to think so; and I can't help thinking," with a wheezy chuckle, "that Tom and his friend will be made more of by the world than they were before. To be pardoned by his Majesty after they had been sentenced to death!"

"Better than if they had been acquitted at first," said Burridge, with a wink at me.

"No doubt—no doubt," cried the old gentleman; "it's a distinction, sir, a distinction. Mr. Langley, your most obedient. Mr. Savage, I am happy to congratulate you. I say," drawing me aside, "I see Miss Martha is here.

I suppose she came of her own accord. This is by no means a proper place for young women. The other young lady is, I suppose, *your* lady. Ah! well, it's human nature. Where is our good friend Mr. Myte, sir?" to Langley.

"He will be here in the evening," returned the other; "particular business detained him, or he had come with me."

"What a man it is for business!" exclaimed the old gentleman; "any thing gives place to it—and so it should. Now, I dare say he wouldn't neglect his business to see his best friend hanged."

"Nor to prevent his hanging," said Langley, whispering in his ear.

"Eh? what? oh, fie—yes, he would; but business must be attended to, whether or no."

So saying, he seated himself by his son, and occupied the time till dinner was announced (when he pricked up his ears briskly) in reflections upon the folly and wickedness of which "Tom" had been guilty; in shuddering comments, with raised hands, upon the ignominious consequences that had like to have ensued, and which had been so providentially averted; and in sundry well-satisfied eulogiums upon his own conduct. "I couldn't do otherwise, Tom." "I know the world better than you." "I'll ask Mr. Myte when he comes whether he thinks I haven't acted quite properly." "I'm willing to forgive you, because of your poor dear mother, and because you're my only son;" "If I'd had another, I'd have cut you off, Tom; I wouldn't have spared you, Tom." "If you had been hanged, what would have become of *me*, Tom?" Such a disgusting old callous blockhead! Tom was ashamed, as well he might be, of such a wretched specimen of paternity. But his presence was, perhaps, serviceable. We had been too happy without him.

"Don't tell me," cried he, "you must have given your mother some cause to hate you like poison, as she does, Mr. Savage. I know the world, and what human nature is, *well*. People don't hate others without cause, much less mothers their sons. You've offended her, sir, bitterly

mine for human nature," said Burridge. "Your talk may do very well for little miss, as you call her, and for her brothers and sisters. Excuse me, Mr. Myte, you can do better."

"Don't be severe upon me, and I'll do as well as I can," returned Myte, who was easily disconcerted. "I wish Dionysius would take himself away, and leave us to make fools of ourselves," he whispered to me by and bye. "All the wisdom he pretends to, or possesses, shouldn't hinder me from being a fool to-night."

Burridge, much to his relief, arose shortly afterwards to leave, pleading a particular engagement, and having concerted to call upon Langley early in the morning, to complete our bail, took his departure.

Myte forthwith abandoned himself to gaiety, and drank so plentifully of the wine, that he speedily brought himself into a fair way of becoming drunk.

"I say, old Greg," he cried, "are you aware that you have been acting a part latterly that has made piety cast up the eye, and humanity hang down the head?"

"My dear sir," replied old Gregory, "I know not what you mean. I trust my conduct has been, and will continue to be, guided by principles that—eh, Tom? what does Mr. Myte mean?"

"I mean," answered Myte, "that your treatment of mad Tom——"

"Forbear!" cried the father, solemnly. "Interfere not between a parent and his child. What, sir? would *you* arraign my conduct—you, who professed the greatest affection for Tom, and the sincerest friendship for Mr. Savage, and yet never came near them? Why, it was the observation of your behaviour that determined mine. I did but imitate *you*."

"Imitate *me*!" said Myte. "No, sir; you didn't imitate *me*—you imitated what is no part of me, but what clings to me as though it were. You remind me of Tom Southerne's story of the player who had a mind to imitate Betterton, and who found it easier to imitate his gout than his acting, and so could hobble like him when he

could do nothing else. But what do you say now? Let us expiate our crimes; for, to confess the truth, I have been as guilty as yourself. John shall have Joan. Tom shall take Martha, just as if nothing had happened. Your thumb to the bargain."

"With all my heart!" cried old Gregory, extending his hand.

"It is clinched!" exclaimed Myte, seizing the thumb of the other. "Oh! my dearest chuck," looking into the face of Elizabeth, upon whose shoulder he had been reclining his head, "would I could find you a husband worthy of you. That I were young again, and unyoked! if I wouldn't supplant Ricardo, I'm a giant. I'll send to you when I am dying, that you may smoothe my pillow and give me a kiss, so shall I die blest, hoping to go whence you came, for sure, my dearest, you must be an angel. My son-in-law, Langley, has told me all."

Myte now began to whimper, a common custom with him when he was in his cups, and was, at length, with some difficulty induced to depart, first insisting that Elizabeth should accompany them home, which she had previously agreed with Martha she would do, and making Gregory and me promise that we would dine with him on the following day.

"I'm not such a heartless rogue as I appear to be; am I, Ricardo?" he said to me, as he was leaving the room.

"You are a very worthy man, sir," said I.

He chuckled at this. "The man was so willing to take what the other man was so willing to offer," said he, "that he didn't see it was a bad sixpence. But I'll soon begin to live for myself alone. When Daniel Myte has Daniel Myte to deal with, he'll come short off, if he doesn't behave himself."

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE MEDITATES AN EXPEDIENT THAT IS NOT HIGHLY CREDITABLE TO HIM; AND WHEREIN THE DEATH OF A FRIEND AND OF AN ENEMY WILL BE FOUND.

In a few weeks after our liberation, Gregory was made happy in the possession of his Martha, and shortly afterwards obtained a more lucrative appointment at the Custom House than the one he had heretofore enjoyed.

In the meantime, I was greatly shocked and grieved at hearing of the lamentable end of Merchant, who was found drowned, closely wedged between two barges, near Westminster Bridge. It was doubtful whether he had fallen, or had thrown himself into the river.

Stephens, the bookseller, for whom Merchant had undertaken and performed a vast quantity of Grub Street, and of whom I made minute inquiries about him, informed me that since he had come into possession of a small sum of money by the death of an uncle, he had never succeeded in prevailing upon him to engage in any literary labour; and that, after his discharge from Newgate, he was observed to languish under a strange depression of spirits;—strange to Stephens, who, although a worthy man enough, was no child of sensibility, and who knew no reason for believing —as, indeed, I had no cause to think—that Merchant was cursed that way. He had, it seemed, become a confirmed drunkard. Drunkenness, which is always the effect, and generally the cause of these depressions; to this, at last, his death must be referred.

"He would come, sir," said Stephens, "and sit on my stool in the shop for half an hour together, crying like a child; then, sir, he would cheer up, and send the boy for brandy, and begin to talk in his wild way. 'There, Stephens,' said he, holding out his hand, (it was the day before I heard of the accident that befel him), 'who shall dare to say that I am not the only man at once qualified

and authorised,' running his finger along the brand, 'to write the lives and deaths of the worthy fellows, who never can be made to believe that honesty is the best policy, and who are carried to Tyburn with a perfect faith, that will not go out of 'em, that it is not so—a persuasion which I also strongly hold, and in which your prosperity more strongly confirms me'—you know his mad way of talking, Mr. Savage. Yes, sir, the very day before he died, he made that speech to me—his last dying speech, I may call it; which, such as it is, I give you for nothing. Nay, sir, don't be offended; I meant no harm; only a jest will out. Poor man! I always thought he would die as wretchedly as Mr. Lovell, whom I think you remember. To be sure you do! Why, I recollect you charitably subscribed towards paying the expense of his burial."

"And have often slept in the very room, and, perhaps, in the very bed in which he died," said I. "Since then, Mr. Stephens, I have had my share of adversity."

"God bless me!" cried he, his respect for me suddenly and sensibly on the decrease. "You are a man of parts, Savage, and I shouldn't mind finding you employment. I have brought forward many gentlemen in my time, I assure you, who now make a splendid appearance."

"I dare say you have, sir; and when I am solicitous about fortune, I'll come to you to help me to make it. Good morning."

But, after a time, my friends once more left me to my own resources. I had, as usual, squandered the allowance made me by Mrs. Oldfield in a very few days, and was now reduced to my last farthing. Still, however, I maintained a good suit of clothes, and a fund of spirits which the many anxieties and necessities of my life had never been able to impair, and which I hope and believe will not depart from me but with my last breath.

My indolence, during several weeks, favoured my mother; and it was not until I had been for the space of a month without a lodging, in which time I fared very ill, both as to bed and board—the butcher's stall more frequently contributing to my repose than to my subsistence; it was

not, I say, till I found that my affairs were in a state of the most pressing necessity, that I sat down and addressed a letter to Mrs. Brett, in which I candidly unfolded the design I had upon her, and in which I enclosed a copy of verses by way of specimen of my abilities in the flaying strain. They were so-so: not so coldly malicious as might have been wished, and as after-reflection taught me the expediency of making any subsequent effusions of a like nature I might have occasion to compose; but they indicated very plainly the will that was within me to prosecute the theme; and the subject of my verses was well aware that I had abundant materials whereon to expatiate. However, she deigned not to return an answer; although I was given to understand my threats had not a little terrified her. I urged my demands a second time, and despatched another copy of verses. These were, I admit, shocking couplets; such, indeed, as, had she not in a manner capitulated, I had hardly dared to publish, being, as they were, altogether as unworthy of me, as they were worthy of her.

These verses had the effect intended. On the evening following the day on which I had transmitted them, calling at the coffee-house at which I had directed any communication she might be pleased to make to me to be addressed, I found a letter lying for me. It was from Lord Tyrconnel, and requested that Mr. Savage would do him the *honour* of calling upon him at an early hour next morning, his Lordship having something very particular to say to him in relation to two letters he had recently forwarded to *his mother*.

My friend Charles Beckingham* being in the coffee-room, I showed the letter to him. He agreed with me

* This young gentleman, who was cut off at an early age, and bade fair to have made a considerable figure in the world of letters, was very much my friend. During my imprisonment in Newgate, he published a short account of me, which had a very large sale. My mother's conduct to me was therein touched upon, and with no gentle hand. She escaped general execration, however, through an initial letter and a dash, an expedient to which it is a pity any man who purposes telling the truth in a right cause should ever resort.

that it meant money, and invited me to sup with him, a motion with which, as I had tasted nothing that day, I very readily complied. I left him at a late hour, after borrowing a guinea.

Why should I refrain from setting down one simple incident that occurred after I left Beckingham? I shall speedily provide against any imputation the ill-natured reader may lay against me of self-glorification, by at once admitting that I take no credit to myself for having done as I did, and that I look upon the act as an effervescence merely of that heroical coxcombry, of which, I believe, I have heretofore spoken.

Behold me, then, on the cock-crow side of midnight, leaning against a post at Charing Cross, the guinea in my pocket pressed between my thumb and fore-finger. I was revolving in my mind whither I should betake myself till morning; that is to say, whether I should at once retire to bed at a public house opposite my old lodging in Queen Street, or whether I should not rather join a host of choice spirits in Wych Street, over whom it had been my custom to preside, and who were now, probably, in the very rapture of merriment.

While I thus stood—lo! a squalid, loathsome figure was before me, the eyes raised to mine, the lips gibbering, and the hands, as it were, sadly pawing each other. I started and almost uttered a cry, so horrible was that woman to me. One of the lank hands was laid upon my arm. I looked down upon her, over my shoulder. "Begone, or let me go," I said.

"Stay!" the voice was very feeble. "I am starving—I want bread. For the love of God, Richard Savage—for the love of him, young man, who loved you, and *me* once —James Ludlow—give me some assistance."

A supplication less potent had sufficed. Poor, shocking wretch! and is not the devil, then, a gentleman of his word, that he provides no better for his faithful servants! Art thou come to this? Lift up thy head, Honesty, for now do I believe thy turn may yet come! Something like this passed through my mind as I looked upon the forlorn

woman; something, alas, of pity—of compassion, stole upon me while I gazed. A minute gone I had sworn it was impossible I could ever forgive this woman—now, I had despised myself had I not done so freely. "I have a guinea in my pocket," I said, "but it is too late to get it changed to-night, or I would spare you a trifle out of it."

The hope of relief, as I conjecture, turned her face, if possible to a more death-like whiteness. "Robinson's is still open," she said, "but I dare not go there; I have quarrelled with Mrs. Edersby. Would you, sir, mind"—she hesitated, "you will not be insulted." I had no wish, I confess, to enter the place; but the condition of Mrs. Ludlow was imminent. She clung to me from very weakness, and I expected every moment that she would faint. I led her across the street, and up the passage, and seating her on an empty barrel in the small area beyond, bade her wait there till I came out.

Mrs. Edersby was in her room. I gave my hat a slouch over the eyes that she might not recognise me, and called for a glass of wine and water, and some biscuits. Having procured these, I laid down my guinea, and received the change; and telling her that I wanted the refreshment for a poor woman whom I had left outside, and who was famishing, promised to return the glass in a minute, and proceeded to my charge.

I watched her in silence, while she despatched what I had brought her, which she did with extreme avidity. The wine revived her, and with her strength returned her shame. When she had drunk the contents of the glass, she placed it into my hand, and rising, muttered thanks and was going from me. I laid my hand upon her shoulder. She stopped, but did not turn. "Your mother, sir, did not incite me to swear falsely against you, as you may have thought. I saw her in the court. It was the sight of her that frightened me."

"I wanted not to hear this," I replied. "I promised to give you some relief; take this," I extended half-a-guinea.

It was some time before she took it from me. When she did, she placed it in the corner of an old rag, which

she drew, I know not whence, and folding it tightly together, placed it in her bosom. So calm and still the while! But now, a violent trembling seized her limbs. I saw her face for a moment, and would have retired. She caught my hand with both her own, and wrung it to agony. A dreadful effort of nature that must have vent, but cannot, struggled in her throat, and swelled it almost to bursting. How I thanked God when the frightful paroxysm was over, and that I had not mentioned her husband's name when I offered the money, which I believe would have killed her.

Go thy ways, miserable abandoned outcast! Not, let me hope, abandoned of Heaven, since the tears that gushed from thine eyes, if they were (as, indeed, they were) thy atonement here, will surely plead for thee hereafter.

I never saw her more. About a year subsequently, however, moved by compassion for the poor woman, or curiosity to learn what was become of her, I conquered my feelings of disgust and abhorrence, so far as to call upon Mrs. Edersby, to whom I made myself known, and of whom I inquired respecting her. The woman told me that she was dead; and entered into particulars, for she had been sent for, it seemed, by the dying creature; and having a grudging kindness for her, attended her death-bed with a bottle of Geneva. Such a death! Such only as such a woman as Mrs. Ludlow can die; such only as a Mrs. Edersby can relate! I forbear.

But this Edersby had a touch of feeling in her, and, I warrant, kept some terms with her conscience, although I suspect she was heavily its debtor. She wept as she related the melancholy end of her gossip; deploring, however, her manifold sins, of which that of perjury appeared in her eyes the most heinous, and which she seemed to believe was the only sin never to be forgiven. Before I left her, she presented to me her third husband, the ferocious Nuttal, to whom she had recently united herself, and who frankly offered me his hand, which I begged to decline.

Upon this he swore, might perdition snatch him away, if I were not one of the noblest spirits that ever carried a sword. "By the soul of man, Mr. Savage," said he, "you do right.

Before I would grasp the *cinque* of a man in fellowship, who had stood in a witness-box to swear my life away, I'd——" here he paused, apparently unable at the moment to choose the destination or to select the office to which he would not rather submit himself. "How is your friend, Mr. Gregory, sir?" he inquired after a pause.

I answered that he was very well.

"I am glad to hear it—a brave spirit—a brave spirit. By the soul of man, I respect you both, from point to hilt. To be sure, I did swear hard against you both," (here his wife cast up her eyes) "but could a man do less for the friend he loved? Mr. Sinclair was my friend, and as noble a spirit as ever drew cold iron. As for the threats I uttered —breath—breath. The dog barks—who heeds him? He can't bite while his mouth is open. Will you sit out a bottle with me, Mr. Savage?"

"I have no time," said I, "I am engaged."

"And no inclination," he returned; "right—right, on my soul, you're right. My service to you. Mrs. Nuttal, your best curtsy to Mr. Savage."

CHAPTER XXVII.

RICHARD SAVAGE MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE AND SECURES THE FRIENDSHIP OF A WORTHY PEER, AND IS FOR THE PRESENT RAISED OUT OF WANT INTO AFFLUENCE.

I WAITED upon Lord Tyrconnel punctually at his appointed time. I have mentioned that his lordship had been very civil to me on several occasions when I had met him at taverns and coffee-houses, and that he appeared in my favour on the trial. There was no diminution of cordiality in his reception of me now; on the contrary, he was excessively friendly, himself setting me a chair, and kindly complaining that I had not before visited him. We talked for some time on general topics; at length, drawing forth his pocket-book, his lordship selected from amongst other documents my two letters to my mother, and holding them towards me said, with a smile,—

"You know these, I presume. Mrs. Brett has put them, and their enclosures, into my hands. Oh! they are too severe. Upon my soul, now, too bitter, Mr. Savage."

"The degree of bitterness is best decided by the provocation," I returned. "They are not too bitter, my lord, I assure you. Nay, they were not written to wound her feelings, but to excite her fears. I designed them as a punishment, not as a correction. You do not know, my lord, how basely I have been treated by this lady."

"I believe I know all," he replied; "the glosses she puts upon her own conduct I can see through, and despise. But now——" he paused, but presently added, "come, what do you say, sir: what is to be done?"

"To say the truth, my Lord," said I, drawing myself up, "what is to be done by Mrs. Brett, or what will be done, I know not,—all I am clear upon at present is, as to what I myself intend to do, should that person resolve to do nothing. Those letters signify my course of action. But I take it for granted—or you had not summoned me hither—that you have some proposal to make to me from the lady."

"Why, no direct proposal," he answered. "The case is this, Savage. We—that is to say, myself and her other relations, are more solicitous about her reputation than she herself appears to be; not but I believe your threats have in no small measure frightened her. But, I suspect, she doubts whether you will carry them into effect. She gives you credit, you see, for a generosity and forbearance she certainly has no claim to."

I could not help breaking forth at this. "Execrable and inexplicable woman!" cried I. "By the living God! Lord Tyrconnel, she may expect no further lenity from me. I concur to the commission of her crimes, while I continue the submissive subject of them. What the world knows through myself and others of her conduct, I cannot recall, nor would I recall it if I could. But she may yet buy my silence for the time to come. Her money shall render me as mute as though I were in the grave, to which she has twice endeavoured to bring me. But tell her from

me, my lord, that no time—that no money—though a hundred years were required to the telling of it—can, or if it could, *shall* abate the disgust, the contempt, the abhorrence with which she has filled my soul."

"I shall tell her no such thing," said he, laughing; "your warmth contradicts your words. My object is, since peace between you is hopeless, to establish a truce. But first let me know whether you really have ever given her reasonable cause of offence."

"You shall judge, sir, for yourself," said I. "To enable you to do so, it will be necessary that I make you acquainted with all that has, at any time, passed between us."

"I am impatient to hear it."

I satisfied his impatience on the instant. It was a long story; but my companion paid the utmost attention to it, frequently enlivening it by interjectional comments that redounded very little to the honour of Mrs. Brett. "I would thank you, my lord, for a moral to this pretty story," said I, in conclusion, laughing lightly; "don't you think an attractive novel might be written upon it? What say you? Shall we put our materials into the hands of Mrs. Haywood? A pity Mrs. Manley is dead. She would, I think, have managed it with more art."

"O God! don't talk so," cried his lordship, with a shudder. He fell into a long contemplation. "I do not know," said he, at length, "whether what I am going to tell you will change your wrath against your mother into pity, or whether it will not rather cause you to hate her more."

"*That* is very unlikely, my lord," said I.

"I understand you. You mean, *that* is impossible. You would, at least, be glad to be told why she has treated you as she has done?"

"Certainly I should not shut my ears against such a communication," I replied; "though, to say the truth, I feel little desire to hear it. The reason she alleges is probably false."

"It is too characteristic to be so, I think," he replied. "You will readily believe that she never loved her first

husband, and perhaps you will concede the possibility that she might have loved Earl Rivers. There cannot be a doubt of it; since for his sake she was willing to risk, nay she voluntarily made a sacrifice of her reputation. She has been condemned for having made the avowal that led to the divorce, but in my opinion very unjustly. It is true, it was on the faith of a promise of marriage, made to her by Lord Rivers when the divorce was obtained, that she was induced to confess her disgrace; but whatever were her motives, I cannot but believe she acted rightly. It would never have done, Mr. Savage," here his lordship assumed an important air, "to impose a supposititious heir upon a noble family. I will not blame her for not having done that."

"Nor I, my lord; although it seems I am to be the sufferer alike by her virtue and her vice. But when one comes to think of it, no great harm had been done, either. I fancy some of our nobility had been all the better for a little imposition. Their legitimates do them small honour, sometimes."

"Ha! very well—very well, indeed," said he; but let me go on. After the divorce, your mother naturally expected that Lord Rivers would fulfil an engagement to which he had set his solemn word of honour, and rescue her from an infamy into which, for his sake alone, she had plunged herself; but this his lordship absolutely refused to do. What says Mr. Congreve?—

> "'Earth knows no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
> Nor hell a fury like a woman scorn'd.'

She is not a woman to supplicate. Her pride was as intense as her love. The knife did not reach his heart—the fury was dragged from his throat. He survived her vengeance, nor was it ever known that she had attempted his life. Her hatred died not with him, but has been transferred to you."

"I must bear it, as I have borne it, as well as I can," I replied; "but not as heretofore, without a consideration. Look you, my lord, this lady-mother of mine derives as

much delight from hating me, as your common vulgar mothers do from loving their children. Now, some of the young hopefuls make their parents pay pretty smartly for their love; and I know not why I shouldn't tax the hate of Mrs. Brett, which is all the more likely to last in consequence. But I will not be unreasonable with her. Cast your eye over my conditions. It will not cost her much—a mere trifle—not worth mentioning to a lady of her spirit and liberality."

"I am sorry to hear you talk in this forced strain," said Lord Tyrconnel. "I had thought what I have been telling you might have weighed with you in her favour. She was basely wronged by Lord Rivers. Her conduct to you, bad as it has been, and indefensible as it is, is not beyond human forgiveness when the provocation is considered. It is at least intelligible."

"To me, it is not so, my lord. On the contrary, you have shown me a character that I hardly supposed could exist, except in a novel or a play. I thought she was merely wicked;—you have told me she is a fool. Pardon me, sir, when I tell you that Mrs. Brett has cajoled you. She is no such fool. She hates me, but not because Lord Rivers was a very sad fellow. Hers is the common cant of those who, being heavily laden with sin, are for others carrying it."

He shook his head. "She married Colonel Brett, that she might expunge the memory of her shame. You were placed out of the way, and in a short time she heard with delight that you—the witness, the proof of her shame, were dead. Consider, how galling to a woman of her spirit, after an interval of so many years, to undergo that shame anew."

"Let her consider that that was no fault of mine. Sometimes, nay, often, I wish to heaven I had never known my parents—that Lady Mason had left me in the hands of the poor wretches to whom I was entrusted—that I had never sought a mother, or never found one! But now, my lord, be pleased to let me know, why I have been summoned hither."

"I will tell you in a few words," he returned. "You are a man of sense and spirit, Savage; and, accordingly, I make little doubt that you will at once see and feel the force of the appeal I am about to make to you. Mrs. Brett has many relations—all persons of honour and condition. You know what a world it is. Any public exposure of your mother, such as you have threatened, however she might carry it, would wound us deeply. The infamy would be reflected upon us. Now, I ask you, whether you can consent to pursue your revenge upon her, knowing that you will injure us, more than you can punish her. Hitherto, we have not interfered, because we felt you had an indisputable right—as we acknowledge you still have—to resist her persecution. But now—it is a question that I wish you seriously to take to heart—have you not already gone far enough? To proceed further—would it be to your honour, and therefore to your advantage? I could say much more—but I see I have said sufficient. Her relations, of whom I am one, hope for your forbearance."

I hesitated; but it was only for a moment. I could never resist an appeal to my generosity. (Sayest thou "No"—man of much length of visage, who art all for virtue in laced clothes, and with whom poverty is the worst vice under heaven, albeit thy incarnate Maker when he came upon the world to save it—even thy very poor soul with the rest—had not where to lay his head—sayest thou "No," I repent? I tell thee then, long-face, thou liest.) I never could resist an appeal to my generosity.

"You *have* said sufficient, my lord," I answered—"and I thank you, that you have said it. Revenge is blind, or sees nothing between itself and its object. I will confess the truth to you. Necessity alone set me upon this work, which hereby I renounce. But that want incited me, I had disdained this pitiful wrangling with a wretch so despicable. Your timely remonstrance has saved her. Her relations need be under no further apprehensions. I desist."

"This," cried Lord Tyrconnel, his eyes glistening, "is

generous beyond expectation. You have done yourself great honour." He came towards me and shook me cordially by the hand. "We must be better acquainted. You must do me yet one further favour."

"I cannot conjecture how I can be of service to Lord Tyrconnel."

"By making my house your home," he replied. "I hope to be distinguished as the friend of Mr. Savage, and I shall study to deserve his friendship. Your merit has been proclaimed, but it must be seen as well as known. I will allow you two hundred a year till my interest, which, I must whisper it in your ear, is considerable with the ministry, obtains an independent appointment for you. You shall have your own apartments, your own servants, and your own time at command, of which last, I hope you will give me as much as you can spare. There can be no friendship where there is no equality. Let it be clearly understood, then, that you are to consider yourself in all respects as your own master, and my house as your own. I would solicit no man's friendship whose advantage I studied, upon other terms; least of all would I insult you by proposing them."

I believe I have set down the very words of Lord Tyrconnel. I was amazed and affected by his so noble, so disinterested munificence. My face spoke my thanks, before my tongue could articulate a syllable. He stopped my acknowledgments by placing his hand upon my mouth.

"Not a word, I insist," said he; "the obligation is on my side. Let us remember we are cousins, till we become friends. The links of friendship are stronger than the ties of blood. You accept my offer?"

"With thanks—with gratitude, my lord."

"Lord me no lords. Here, take this," handing me familiarly a bank-bill of a hundred pounds, "six months in advance. You see I am a man of business." Then surveying me, "How is this? you do not plead guilty after a King's pardon, sir? I hope the late unhappy passage in your life has not caused you to forswear carrying a sword?"

"To say the truth," I returned, in some confusion, "I

was in such haste to keep my appointment with your lordship, that I forgot it." (But the *real* truth is, that I had surrendered it to the pawnbroker a month before.)

"You must gratify me by wearing this," said his lordship, going into an inner room and presently returning with a silver-hilted sword, which he placed in my hands.

It was now settled that I should take up my abode with him at the expiration of a few days, by which time I should have completed such arrangements as were necessary to my appearance in the quality of a gentleman.

"By the by, one word more with you," said he, when I was taking my leave. "Mrs. Brett appears very solicitous to know what is become of a young lady—Miss Wilfred, the daughter of Sir Richard Steele, who was many years under her charge. Your mother, I have reason to believe, was greatly attached to the young lady."

"It will be a consolation to her, then, to know," I answered, "that Miss Wilfred is, and has been for a long time past, in honourable hands. Miss Wilfred is living with the Countess of Hertford. I thought Mrs. Brett knew as much; and yet, probably, Sir Richard was too much offended with her, as he well might be, to satisfy her upon the point."

"Did you see Steele before he retired to Wales?"

"I did not."

"When I last saw him, he spoke with affectionate kindness of you, and shed tears, as he did so. His resentment ceased long since."

"Had I known that," I replied, "I would have waited upon him, and taken a farewell of my friend and benefactor. I loved him ever, and it is a happiness to me to know that he remembered me with kindness."

"Pardon me," said his lordship, after a pause, "perhaps I am impertinently curious, but was there not at one time a kind of engagement subsisting between Miss Wilfred and yourself?"

"There was, and is. It still subsists."

"I really am too free, cousin Savage," said his lordship laughing and rubbing his chin—"but you will forgive me. To what does that engagement tend?"

"You cannot doubt, my lord?" I inquired in surprise.

"I do not know."

"To the approved consummation of such contracts—old fashioned but still fashionable matrimony."

"Matrimony!" with a stare and a whistle. "What in the name of the twelve tribes of Israel put matrimony into your head?"

I returned his stare—"My lord!"

"Come, come," said he, "you look as grave as though you were already married. I meant nothing. Marriage is an honourable estate."

"Your lordship is married, I believe?" I observed.

"Why—yes," with a comical shrug. "Young men must be fools, else there would be no wise old ones. But, hang it! you mustn't think of it yet. Dick Savage—the gay, the lively, the elegant Dick Savage—the salt, the soul of society, trudging sun-sodden on the Sabbath to Islington fields, with an armful of the next generation! Gods! It must not be."

There was little delicacy in this speech, nor was it well spoken, but it passed. I laughed in concert with the wit, although not quite so heartily, and we parted the best friends in life.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE DOES NOT APPEAR TO THE BEST ADVANTAGE; AND WHEREIN THE READER WILL SEE THE LAST OF A STRANGE CHARACTER.

During the first year of my residence with Lord Tyrconnel, no man could exercise the offices of friendship with more scrupulous delicacy—with a more heedful regard to my feelings, and to his own dignity, than his lordship. Thus much I owe it to truth and to justice to record. The original terms of our connexion he did not once invade or infringe. He expressed, and I think he felt, the utmost friendship for me—the greatest pleasure in my society—the sincerest anxiety for my ease and comfort, the most

zealous desire for my welfare and advancement. To suppose me insensible to treatment like this (the supposition has often taken the form of an assertion, which I regard not) is to suppose me a heartless monster. I was grateful to him, and he knew it—grateful as one man should be to another who befriends him, and does it handsomely.

In this interval of prosperity, I found leisure to complete a poem, begun long before, which I entitled, "The Wanderer." Its purpose, I know, is in the highest degree moral. It attempts to show, and successfully as I think, that misery, while it chastens, purifies the mind; that adversity strengthens the character; and that out of fleeting woe proceeds lasting happiness. I had not suffered in vain. I had been a worse man had I never been made to feel how difficult it is to continue a good one in adversity.

It is not for me to prate of my own performance. Thus much, however, I will say, that the world remains my debtor for that poem, and that the man who could write it, whatever be his faults, or however great they may have been, is entitled to give "the lie, the loud lie," as old Massinger says, to any smug-souled rascal, who, on the strength of a sluggish pulse, and a dwelling in decencies, presumes to tell the author of "The Wanderer," that he has never practised virtue, or that he does not reverence goodness.

I dedicated "The Wanderer" to Lord Tyrconnel, in a strain of fervent encomium which nothing but the strength and sincerity of my gratitude could excuse. If I am conscious of any motive to the expression of so extravagant a praise of my patron as is to be found in that dedication, beyond what the impulse of my then present feelings towards him prompted me to utter, it is a desire to please Lady Tyrconnel by the exaltation of her husband. Of the excellence of this lady, of her sisterly regard, I might almost term it affection for me, time shall never efface the remembrance from my bosom.

I sold the copyright of the "The Wanderer" for ten guineas, a very inconsiderable sum, viewed as a payment for labour; but which an immediate, although a momentary, want of money disposed me to accept. And yet, paltry

as this sum was, Johnson, several years afterwards, got no more for his poem of "London," a performance which, if it possess less of the "vivida vis"—less of the drawn lightning than is to be found in Pope's satires, undoubtedly excels each and all of the productions of the latter in grave, manly, and majestic dignity.

It may be taken for granted that the fame I obtained by the publication of my poem elevated me not less in my own estimation than in the opinion of the world; it will be believed, also, that my success made the small wits more determinately my professed enemies, and that I took no pains to conciliate their regard, or to assuage their malice. Indeed, I was so much above them, and beyond the reach of their poor devices, that I ridiculed and despised them.

In the mean time, I paid frequent visits to Elizabeth—the one being in the world who loved me, and to whom, therefore, I could impart my hopes, my expectations, and my feelings, in the assurance of sincere and perfect sympathy. She was delighted with the favourable reception my poem had met with, and predicted that I should, at no distant period, establish a very high reputation in the world of letters. It was perfectly understood between us, that we were to be married so soon as Lord Tyrconnel kept his word with me, of which, latterly, I had somewhat importunately reminded him, and which was, that he would obtain a lucrative appointment for me from Sir Robert Walpole; —a man, to say the truth, of whose politics I had no admiration, for whose person I had little regard, and of whose conversation I had the utmost disgust and abhorrence. Nevertheless, he could bestow a place as well as a better man; he had passed his word to Lord Tyrconnel that he would do something for me, and to do him justice, he had the reputation of being a strict observer of his promise.

It was not until my visits to my mistress had continued for a considerable time, that I perceived, or fancied that I perceived, a coldness toward me on the part of Lady Hertford; a sedate formality of deportment, perfectly within the rules of good breeding, but which partook more of dignity than politeness, although, in my opinion, there was

not very much of either. This appearance troubled me but little; indeed, it is possible I should not have observed it, only that I could not but detect a reserve—a constraint—a confusion in Elizabeth, whilst Lady Hertford was present, for which I could not account, and of which, at length, therefore, I set myself upon learning the reason. There was as much tenderness at parting, in her eyes and in her manner, and a more serious and affecting softness of voice, so that I was constantly assured of the continuance of her entire affection. It was clear to me that to the countess I must refer the cause of this mysterious behaviour.

I seized an opportunity one evening, when we were alone, of acquainting Elizabeth with the extent of my observations, and earnestly begged her to tell me in what manner I had offended Lady Hertford, that I might at once put myself in the way of recovering her esteem and confidence.

My appeal embarrassed her greatly. I remarked, however, that her embarrassment arose less from confusion than concern.

"I was not aware," she said, "that you had noticed any change in the demeanour of Lady Hertford towards you; neither do I know that you have given her any cause of offence—consciously, I am sure you have not."

"What, then, is the cause of her coldness? Tell me all, I entreat you."

"I shall not offend you, Richard?"

"Impossible."

"Her ladyship, then, has of late frequently expressed her fears to me that you are leading too dissipated a life, and that you may fall into habits of expense, and self-gratification, that may be injurious to you hereafter. She says——"

"Many wise things, doubtless," interrupted I, gaily: "a pity the text is not more worthy of the comment. Do you partake her fears, Elizabeth?"

"I do not," she answered, readily. "I know the stability of your principles, and the rectitude of your mind. The author of 'The Wanderer,'" she added, with a glow of generous warmth, "can never suffer himself to be betrayed into vulgar excesses, at which Lady Hertford hints—or

vicious indulgences, of which his writings proclaim his abhorrence. No, you have been a sufferer; but you never will be a victim—least of all to yourself."

Sweet enthusiast! to have loved thee is, indeed, to have loved virtue, and in its loveliest shape.

"And this is all!" cried I; "how proud and grateful I ought to be, that Lady Hertford condescends to betray so friendly a solicitude for my well-doing. I must positively return her my acknowledgments."

"I am angry with myself," said Elizabeth, after a pause, seating herself by my side, "that I have so long withheld from you what I am about to tell you."

She spoke this in so serious a voice, that I could but gaze upon her in silence.

"Lady Hertford," she resumed, "has been very pressing with me for some time past—so much so, I confess, that I am made unhappy by her importunities—to break the engagement between us."

"Ha! and upon what plea?—for what reason?—the one you mentioned?"

"She urges that. But there is a gentleman—a Mr. Grantley——"

"A Mr. Grantley!—And he is all that may be wished for, I'll be sworn," said I, with a sneer; "such a handsome man! such a rich man! such a worthy man!—Naughty girl! to think of wicked Mr. Savage: you should meditate upon good Mr. Grantley! But this device is grandmotherly, my Elizabeth. Add all my good qualities to Mr. Grantley, and transfer all his bad ones to me, and a taking contrast is presented. I am much obliged to her ladyship. But tell me, who is this Mr. Grantley? A gentleman of figure, of course?"

"He is."

"Is he rich?"

"He is said to be so."

"Handsome?"

"Very."

I was startled by so prompt a reply.

"You do not love him, Elizabeth?" I inquired at length, looking, as I conjecture, very much like a booby.

"Fie! what a question!" she replied.

"Abrupt—but I hope——"

"*You know* I do not," she said, interrupting me, and laying her hand upon mine. "I want your advice. I know not how to carry myself in this unpleasant affair. Lady Hertford begins to be exceedingly, painfully importunate with me. You know my obligations to her; and Mr. Grantley, although I have informed him I am under an engagement to another, still persists——"

"In smirking, and sighing, and dropping his eyelids, and looking at his hat, and shrugging his shoulders, and hanging over chair-backs. Poor man! why do you smile at the picture of so pitiful a rogue? I'll hazard a shrewd guess, now, that he hopes time may induce you to look with favour upon him—that he is perfectly sensible how unworthy he is of so much honour, of so great a happiness; and yet——"

"I am sorry I smiled at your whimsical description," said she. "Do not ridicule the misplaced affection of a worthy and honourable man, who deserves, I'm sure, a better woman than your Elizabeth; and who, I sincerely hope, will meet with one."

"I have no great opinion of that man's worth," I replied, "who persists in persecuting a lady with his addresses, and who would fain have her break her engagement to another. My love, this must not continue. I will seek an interview with Lady Hertford. She is a woman of sense and feeling. It cannot be, after the representations I shall make to her, that you will be put to any further pain on this gentleman's account."

I sought an early occasion of waiting upon Lady Hertford. I told her, without reserve, what had been imparted to me by Elizabeth; and reminding her of her knowledge of the existence of the contract between that young lady and myself, and of the approval she had formerly given to it, I ventured to inquire how it came to pass that she should set herself in the way of its fulfilment.

She heard me with attention, and with an unmoved countenance. She replied nearly as follows:—

"When my friend, Sir Richard Steele, waited upon me, and opened to me his perplexity in relation to Miss Wilfred, whom he had been compelled to withdraw from the house of Mrs. Brett, I consented at once to receive her into my family. I have had cause to congratulate myself upon having done so. I intended a service to Sir Richard; I have gained a blessing to myself. Miss Wilfred is a most admirable young lady. I love her as a mother, or rather" —here her ladyship bridled—"as an elder sister might do. I feel that I ought to interest myself in her welfare and happiness. I feel, also, that I have, in some sort, a right to counsel, and, if necessary, to direct her. I must not be interrupted. I confess, Sir Richard's character of you, joined to your peculiar misfortunes, pleaded strongly for you in my favour; and I acknowledge that, for a long time, I believed the happiness of Miss Wilfred might be safely entrusted to your keeping; but—" she paused.

"I have been anxiously waiting for the 'but,' madam," said I, with an easy smile; "I saw the rogue all along; though, as he always does, he skulked behind his betters. Let me hear, I beseech you, what the disparaging conjunction has to say for himself, or against me."

"Your levity displeases me," returned Lady Hertford, stiffly. "*I*, Mr. Savage, have to say this—Whatever hopes I might formerly have entertained of you, have been disappointed, long since. I have been told, and I believe you cannot deny, that your excesses—I will say no more. O sir, you are not worthy of Miss Wilfred!"

I could not deny that I had launched out into all the pleasures within my reach. I had never sought to withhold my passions from any gratification they could lay hold upon. My pride was no mongrel of the pack. Her ladyship awoke it.

"I presume to remind your ladyship," said I, "that my conduct, whatever it be, and however it may stand in need of it, is not subject to your revision. Let me recall to your ladyship's mind, likewise, that Miss Wilfred, although under your protection, is not at your disposal. I am far from believing that your ladyship would attempt to perse-

cute Miss Wilfred into a compliance with your wishes. Pardon me, I had never thought it possible that Lady Hertford and Mrs. Brett could be associated in my mind for one instant."

"I will not hear a word against Mr. Grantley!" exclaimed the countess, in some heat. "Mr. Grantley is a man of honour, *and of virtue*," with an emphasis; "Mrs. Brett and myself, I thank you, sir, offer no points of comparison. I shall not persecute Miss Wilfred. Her good sense will, in time, acknowledge the justness of my decision; and to that shall I appeal, and upon that will I rely."

"Your ladyship will hardly be called upon for your decision," I replied. "Miss Wilfred has consented to place herself under my protection, until my affairs assume a stability which will warrant me in fulfilling a contract which Miss Wilfred considers as equally binding upon herself as upon me. How reluctantly she has been brought to this step you may imagine, who know her grateful nature, and how much cause she has of gratitude towards you. She herself, doubtless, will assure you of the deep and lasting sense she entertains of your goodness."

Lady Hertford was thunderstruck.

"Good heavens, sir! Do you mean to say?——"

"Yes, madam, I do," interrupted I, impatiently; "and to justify the *decision* to which Miss Wilfred has come, and to avow that my earnest persuasion has prevailed with her."

"Surely she can never be so thoughtless—so mad!" she replied.

She took two or three turns about the room. My intelligence had greatly discomposed her. I watched her countenance. I perceived concern for Elizabeth upon it, which was gradually dismissed to make way for anger against me.

"*You* protect Miss Wilfred!" she cried, at length; "and how, supposing confidence might be placed in your honour——"

"Madam!"

"I repeat it. I say, *if* confidence might be placed in your honour, how are you to protect Miss Wilfred? you who are yourself indebted to protection which may be in a

moment recalled? You, who owe your existence to Lord Tyrconnel's charity—his bounty—his benevolence—his friendship——"

Lady Hertford had gone too far. These qualifying substitutions of phrase were made with a heightened colour, reflected, as it seemed, from my burning cheeks. I gulped down my rising choler. Placing my hand upon my breast, I made her a low bow.

"Your ladyship is very considerate. But for Lady Hertford, I might have forgotten my dependent situation. Lord Tyrconnel never reminds me of it. Your ladyship, I conclude, frequently relieves Miss Wilfred from all danger of forgetting *her* obligations."

I had wounded her to the quick, and was sorry that I had done so. Her ladyship's face expressed shame and contrition.

"I am afraid, Mr. Savage, I have hurt your feelings. Your answer was severe, but I deserved it. Pardon me;" so saying, she extended her hand.

I raised it to my lips, and without a word withdrew. She was mistaken. She had not hurt my feelings, or but little. Feelings may be pinched till they become numbed; and many a horny thumb and forefinger had wrung mine already.

But I was not to have my own way so easily as I had thought. Elizabeth had not expressly consented to place herself under my protection. Such was her veneration for Lady Hertford, and so fearful was she of offending her, or of appearing ungrateful—so convinced, also, was she that her ladyship was actuated by the sincerest friendship towards her, (for Grantley, to do him justice, was a man of as much merit as fortune,) that I had the utmost difficulty in conquering her scruples. She herself was sensible of Grantley's pretensions. She acknowledged his excellent and exemplary qualities. She admired the spirit, the vivacity, the ease of his conversation. She admitted that his behaviour towards her was, upon all occasions, most polite and respectful.

"There was no gentleman," she said, "for whom she had

a higher esteem, or whose friendship she was more anxious to retain."

"Upon such sentiments alone is happiness in the marriage state founded, my love," said Lady Hertford, "and by these only is it secured." As she said this, she turned to me with an expression of countenance intended to be wise, but which was merely owlish.

"I thought love was an ingredient," said I carelessly. "Your ladyship would inoculate Miss Wilfred with your small happiness, that she may take it mildly now, and never catch it afterwards."

"I hope, sir," she replied, "Miss Wilfred will never have cause to regret the honour she is about to confer upon you. I trust you will be as happy with Miss Wilfred as Mr. Grantley would have been; and that she will be as happy with you, as she would have been with him. I have pleaded his cause strongly, I confess; and I have not spared you. My affection for this dear girl must be my excuse. Let me see that I have been mistaken in you."

Words! words! To square one's conduct to the limitary exactions of middle-aged ladies of title, who pride themselves upon their good sense! "Mistaken in me!" and why had she been mistaken in me?—Because she could not comprehend me; and yet, no man more easily comprehended. I hate these dull deciders, who pronounce that vice, which is but the trick of the vein, and think warm blood and animal spirits immoral. I would rather fetch dew "from the still-vexed Bermoothes," than sit by a standing pool and meditate on chickweed!

Lady Hertford's opposition to my scheme being withdrawn, I proceeded to put it in execution without delay. I hired a handsome and commodious lodging for Elizabeth. The house was situated in an agreeable and fashionable quarter of the town, and was kept by a widow lady—a Mrs. Phillips—a most respectable woman, and, in a word, in every way not only unexceptionable but excellent.

This step was highly approved by Lady Hertford, who came to inspect the lodging, and to satisfy herself as to the character of the good woman of the house. She pro-

mised frequent visits, and made them. Elizabeth renewed her friendship with Mrs. Gregory, who, with her husband, frequently called upon her, and who, as often, invited her to their house. Langley, then just become Sir Edward, and his lady, also condescended to wait upon her, and were pleased in a very ceremonious manner to express a wish that she would honour them with her company for a month at their country-house; but as there was reason to believe this was intended merely for civility, the visit was never paid.

Dear old Daniel Myte, with whose fooleries I have, I fear, in the preceding pages, wearied the reader; albeit, to record them, has been to "interpose a little ease" between the wearisome labour I have entailed upon myself, and which, having gone so far, I shall not intermit till it be completed—one further word concerning thee!

I had not seen Gregory for some time, when he called upon me one day in deep mourning, and informed me that both Myte and his wife were dead.

"You were aware," said he, "that Mrs. Myte had been ailing weeks past, and that the poor little man had taken a lodging for her at Edgeware, which he said was just far enough to make the smoke of London airy, and the air of the country smoky. He had no suspicion that his wife was dying; indeed, as you know, he never thought of death, and could not bear to hear it mentioned. When she died, (we were all present, Langley and his wife, myself and Martha,) a stupefaction came over him. He could not believe she was dead—he would not—it could not be. The preparations necessary on these occasions restored him to consciousness, and enforced belief upon him. It was a piteous sight to see this man, unacquainted with sorrow, receive this heavy affliction. I will not shock you with the description." Here Gregory was much troubled, and could not proceed.

"Go on—go on—my heart bleeds for the little fellow."

"His screams," continued Gregory, "screams like those of a woman, were heard throughout the house—nay they filled it. His daughters, terrified, you may be sure, endeavoured

on their knees, clasping his, to soothe him, imploring him to bear his sorrows like a man; but he spurned them from him with blows. At length, he was got to bed, and there he lay for four days, rejecting every thing that was offered him, refusing comfort, preserving an obstinate, or rather, perhaps, an insensible silence. On the evening of the fourth day he spoke. 'Where are my girls?' I was watching by his side. 'I will fetch them to you, dear sir.' 'Is that you, Gregory? What is the time? Bring them to me. I think I am dying.' *That* was certain. There is no mistaking death. His daughters knelt by his side. 'Have you prayed for your poor mother, my darlings?—pray for me, too—death is upon me. Langley—Gregory—all of you—pray for me!' We all knelt down. There was a long silence. We withdrew from the bed-side, thinking that he would sleep. Suddenly, he said these words in a loud, articulate, and earnest tone of voice: 'I want to see Richard Savage.'

"We looked at each other, doubtful at the moment whether the voice had proceeded from him. There was something awful—thrilling in the tone. I stept to the bedside and bent over him. "He is miles away, dear sir, in London.'

"He took my hand and sighed heavily. 'Would he were here, poor dear lad; I want to see him.'

"He turned restlessly in his bed, clasping his hands, and holding them above his face. I knew not what to say. 'I will tell him that you thought kindly of him, dear sir.' 'Do—do. Oh, my God! have mercy on me. I am all darkness. Tell him to pray for me—all, all pray for me!' Another sigh—and he was gone."

I shed many tears during this recital, for I loved the man, and not less the good "Flusterina," who had been to him the best wife in the world, as, indeed, he deserved that she should be; for there could not be a more tender husband or a more indulgent father than Myte.

"I want to see Richard Savage." And *wherefore* did he want to see me? This question did not suggest itself to me for months afterwards; and I am almost ashamed to

avow that it has recurred many times since, as it does now, for the last time; for I will entertain it no more. "Poor dear *lad!*" were his words. This is idle. And yet will I give the reader a cue to—I will not call them my suspicions, but my fancies—I set down the name of Ludlow. If this do not suffice, perhaps I am glad of it. Rest in peace, Daniel Myte! Between thee and Richard Savage there *is* peace!

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE APPEARS TO BE NOT VERY HANDSOMELY TREATED; AND EXHIBITS AN ALACRITY IN RESENTING INSULT.

During six months then last past, I, who had many times in the course of my life been upon the very verge of starvation—who, for the chief portion of my existence, had been beholden to the friendship of others for my support, who was at that very time a dependant upon the bounty of another—during six months, I say, had I protected Elizabeth Wilfred. It was little short of ecstasy, the reflection that to me was she indebted (*indebted*—what a word!) for the means of her procuring all that was necessary to her life, agreeable to her comfort, or productive of her happiness. It was a great addition to my felicity, that she never, by words, reminded me of this; and that, whatever she might have felt, she did not display any particular sense of dependence in her own case, or of protection in mine. None but the base pay these tributes; none but the unworthy expect or accept them.

What now was wanting to complete and to establish our joint happiness?

Nothing but the fulfilment of his promise, on the part of Sir Robert Walpole. But this was not to be.

Very shortly after Elizabeth had withdrawn herself from Lady Hertford, and placed herself under my care, I was led to a suspicion that Lord Tyrconnel's favourable sentiments towards me were changed. He was sometimes peevish and

captious; and, upon other occasions, there was more off-hand familiarity in his manner of addressing me than I well knew how to brook. Pointless raillery, rough horse-play, bantering buffoonery, I could never endure, and I sometimes told him so; hinting, that if he forgot himself, I must desire that he would remember me. Then would he beg my pardon, with "Confound you, Dick, for a ceremonious companion! may not a man speak to you? Put away that sour face. Prithee, be a man of this world."

At other times, however, as I have said, he was petulant and capricious—angry without a cause, or venting it upon him who had not given him offence. When he sought to vent it upon me, he found not his account in it. Either, I returned some reply that stung, while it silenced him, or lightly laughed him into a rage, which he dare not show; or, which was worst of all, and sometimes set him almost beside himself with passion, I gravely took him to task for his unreasonable humours and foolish exhibitions of passion, which I told him I could, being a friend, forgive; but which, I cautioned him, if shown before strangers must render him ridiculous and contemptible.

"Reflect, too, my lord," I would add with much solemnity, "how by making your own petty vexations, and by giving way to these juvenile humours, you disturb your own happiness. Trifles cease to be so, if you encourage 'em. You must not destroy your comfort, which is a great part of happiness."

How grim would he look at his provoking and inwardly chuckling monitor!

This, however, was sorry employment. I was ever a lover of peace, an advocate for good humour, a promoter of conviviality. It is an odious existence, that of living with a man who compels you, by his conduct, to keep your mind always unsheathed, to check the impertinence of familiarity, or to repress the insolence of rank. I began to feel—he, indeed, began to make me feel—that I was not so much under his protection as subject to his power. And now it was that I was set upon reviewing the whole course of his behaviour towards me, since I had been an

inmate of his mansion. It could not be concealed that we stood in a very different relative position toward each other, from that which he himself had, in the first instance, defined, and upon the faith of the continuance of which, I had consented to accept his patronage.

I now remembered many things, some trivial enough, but one or two of a graver description, which had contributed to the change of position of which I have spoken. Over a narrow bridge one must go first, the other follow; but should the bridge be barely wide enough for two, and they go abreast, if one jostle and the other step aside the latter goes into the stream.

I should have resisted all encroachment from the first, and so I had done, but that it did not appear to me in the form of encroachment. "Blinded first and then betrayed" by gratitude, I was too happy to accommodate myself to the wishes of Lord Tyrconnel, and did not stop to reflect that sometimes these wishes were unreasonable, and such as hardly became him to ask, or me to perform. A request would be made to do a certain thing, as a favour. When it was done—behold! there was a precedent which facilitated a second application and made refusal more difficult. But these solicitations, on his part, and compliances on mine, were not made and granted until after I had lived a considerable period with his lordship, by which time my attachment towards him had been strengthened, and our intimacy appeared to warrant a frank dealing with me, as with a friend. Insensibly, therefore, the change was effected, which it was useless to lament, because it was impossible to rectify it. The more exacting he became, the more punctilious was I. He would have had me grovel; it was then I soared. He would sometimes indirectly remind me that I was a dependant; I would in the same manner give him to understand that I honoured him with my intimacy. This state of things—this opposition of persons—although there was a great deal of outward respect, of civil leer, of shrug, of grimace—this state of things could not last. My equanimity, my patience, was fast giving way.

One day, he had compelled me to break an engagement I was under to Gregory, that I might dine with him. I would, of course, have gladly excused myself; but he pressed me so earnestly and with such apparent friendship, that I could not well refuse. It was a small party. To one of the guests his lordship begged particularly to introduce me—Sir Arthur Page! I could not so easily conceal my surprise as my resentment. It had become habitual to me to repress the latter in Lord Tyrconnel's company, that he might not know when his insults were effectual. Page was evidently astonished, and bowed very low, to hide his confusion. I but glanced at our judicious and considerate host. Such an embarrassing attempt at ease! That Hogarth had seen that rigid smirk—that introverted roll of the eye! I have beheld nothing like it, even on his myriad-featured canvass.

Page, during the evening, treated me with extraordinary respect; and had he been left to his own discretion would have avoided any topic that was likely to be distasteful to me; but Lord Tyrconnel would not permit this—it was for no such purpose he had invited him thither. He directed the conversation to the subject of criminal trials; more particularly to such as, in their leading circumstances, or in their results, resembled mine. I remember he particularly referred to the case of Lord Mohun, who was tried for the murder of Mountford, the player. There were no *points* of resemblance between this and my own case: but the whole conversation was so managed, on Lord Tyrconnel's side, as to be made extremely offensive to me. The rest of the company opened their eyes gravely, pushed out their under-lips, and looked at me with a slight shrug, indicating their surprise and concern that such a subject should be broached in my presence; and Page himself at length abruptly changed the discourse. I had, perhaps, taken no immediate notice of this gross insult, but that Page—the brute, but not the blockhead—felt it necessary to exonerate himself from any accusation that might lie against him of inventing or participating the pitiful wretchedness.

On leaving, he drew me aside, and very earnestly denied all intention of wounding my feelings, denouncing, at the same time, the bad taste of his lordship in the choice of so ticklish a subject.

Some degree of forbearance was due to Page on the score of his office and of his years, yet I believe no soothing speech addressed to me could ever proceed from the old rascal's lips, that would not have the effect of awakening rather than of lulling my wrath against him.

I kept down the venom of my spleen with infinite difficulty. What I replied I forget; a spurning expletive or two, it may have been, and I think it was. "One might have lighted a candle by his face," as I heard Mrs. Short say of Carnaby upon one occasion, after she had taxed him with the mysterious appropriation of some cold pudding.

Page went his way without further word, and I betook myself to a tavern to take a cool view of the evening's proceedings over a bottle of wine.

I returned late, and hearing that Lord Tyrconnel had not retired to bed, but was in his library, I walked up thither—knocked, and was admitted.

"Oh, Mr. Savage, is it you?" said his lordship. "I am, as you see, very busy," he was writing, "and must not be interrupted."

"It is but seldom I disturb you, my lord; to-night you will excuse me." I drew a chair, and seating myself directly opposite to him, fixed my eyes steadfastly upon his face, and said:

"I want to know, my Lord Tyrconnel, why it is you treat me thus?"

He was probably prepared for remonstrance, but the peremptoriness of my tone was something he did not expect. He laid down his pen.

"What on earth, Savage, do you mean?" he inquired, affecting an ignorance which he could not make his face assume.

"I will tell you," I replied. "It was at your urgent persuasion that I dined with you to-day. You know I had previously engaged myself to my oldest and my best friend,

Mr. Gregory. You are aware that he leaves England the day after to-morrow, for Antigua, and that I shall have no opportunity of spending a few hours with him. You told me you could not dispense with my company—that you expected Sir Robert Walpole, who was, you believed, prepared to tell me something definite and certain respecting the appointment he has so long promised. Well, my lord, instead of Walpole I find Page——"

"Well," cried he, interrupting me, "and what if you do? I hope I am to be permitted the privilege of inviting to my own house and to my own table whomsoever I please! Mr. Savage—Mr. Savage—this——"

"This what?" I returned sharply. "Mr. Savage wants to know why he was introduced by you to Sir Arthur Page; whether, by so doing, you intended to affront him, and if you did, wherefore he should not resent a freedom you presume to take with him, which does not come within the scope of your privileges, and which he intends shall never so come?"

This speech roused him, but it was only for a moment. He returned himself to his former position. Could I have beheld his face confessed, which was partially concealed by his fingers that he had placed transversely before it, I doubt not I should have seen an extremely mean spectacle. Why should men put themselves upon committing dirty actions until they have renounced shame? Here was a man —a lord—not without pride or destitute of courage, afraid, because he was ashamed, to justify a paltry insult, of which he should have left the perpetration to others who were without shame or fear. He spoke at last.

"I am surprised, sir, greatly surprised to hear you—*you* address me in this strain!"

"Probably you are," I replied. "Perhaps you will be more so when I tell you that it is a strain your own conduct has forced upon me. I know not whether your surprise will be greater or less when I avow to you *my* surprise that you should feel any."

"How!—I do not understand!—But—come, come, Savage," assuming a familiar tone and air, "we won't

fight till we know the cause of quarrel. There is some mistake here. Did I not tell you before dinner, Walpole couldn't come?"

"You did not; nor that Page could, and would."

"Pr'ythee lay aside that sad brow, and voice like the click of a trigger," said he. "What would you have me say? I am sorry we had not Sir Robert; and as to Page—I protest I hadn't the least notion in life that you didn't care to see that old Rhadamanthus. Why now, were not the man as blind as the justice he misrepresents, he would have seen that my introduction of you to him was a cutting reproof. Did you mark how I had him in Oneby's case? Not you—I saw you looking as black as a Saxon at curfew."

After all, then, did he not design to insult me? Bland as he looked—affable and smiling—for he had now perfectly recovered his self-possession—I was assured he did. But he had so happily secured himself, that I could say nothing at that time. His object was to wear out my patience by the friction of petty vexations, incessantly repeated, that when the rupture took place—which he had decreed, and I foresaw—I should have no one grave charge to bring against him.

I accepted his apologies, of which he was profuse, and listened to his professions, which were more clamorous than usual, with the best grace I could muster; which, to say the truth, was not a little the worse for wear, and which on this night I could hardly prevail upon myself to put on at all. I had heard something after I left his hospitable board that made it difficult to me to speak with common civility to him.

At the tavern to which I had gone, I met Colonel Cleland, the Will Honeycomb of the Spectator, need I add a former friend of Addison, of Steele, and of Brett? The warm-hearted old gentleman, whenever I encountered him, commonly confined his inquiries, which were pursued with considerable perseverance, to my situation and prospects, usually commenting upon my replies in a very doubtful and dissatisfied manner. He had many times thrown out significant hints that little dependence was to be placed in

the professions of Lord Tyrconnel, that he was a person who studied the dictionary rather than the decalogue; "more words than worth, Dick," and that he would one day make or find an occasion to discard me, if I did not get from him some legal settlement. He had always shaken his head incredulously, whenever I launched out in praise of my patron, and when I urged the two hundred a year, he would answer, "*His* pocket is none the worse of it."

On this, the last occasion of my seeing him, however, he was more explicit. He assured me, he had it from good authority that the proposition his lordship made me was the result of an understanding between my mother and him; that, terrified by my threats, she felt herself compelled to purchase my silence; but that, too proud to admit the compulsion, she had concerted this scheme with Lord Tyrconnel, who was not averse from a reputation for generosity and munificence, when he could acquire it without expense.

The knowledge of this fact, for fact it is, although from that day to this I have never been in a situation to prove it, had no influence whatever upon my deportment towards Lord Tyrconnel, who, on his part, began to be more circumspect in his dealings with me. But the *rift* had been made, and every effort to close it gave either side a rocking motion, an impetus the wrong way, leaving it wider than before. Ere we break asunder, good Lord Tyrconnel, that the reader may the less believe that I have done thee injustice, by speaking as I have done of thee, let me tell him something of myself. It were not worth my while to speak lies of Lord Tyrconnel, after I have decided upon speaking the truth of Richard Savage.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHEREIN RICHARD SAVAGE ACTS A MOST UNWORTHY PART; AND QUARRELLING WITH HIS PATRON, LEAVES THE READER TO DECIDE WHICH IS THE LESS ESTIMABLE PERSON OF THE TWO.

HOWEVER fortune may have treated me in the main, it must be admitted that in one particular instance, she was

in the truest sense favourable to me, since to fortune, not to any merit of mine, am I to ascribe the preference with which Elizabeth Wilfred regarded me. This woman, beautiful, virtuous, noble-minded; the very soul of sweetness, of sincerity, and of honour; who, for my sake, had resisted the importunities of Mrs. Brett (whom she loved), in favour of Sinclair, a man of figure and fortune, whose addresses were believed to be honourable; who had stood firm against the solicitations of Lady Hertford (to whom she was bound by ties of the strongest gratitude) in behalf of Mr. Grantley, a gentleman, let me say so, of unquestionable pretentions to the hand of any lady in England—this woman had placed herself under my protection, had committed her present and future happiness to my care, trustingly, confidingly, absolutely; as assured of my love and of my honour, as though both had been attested by an angel on the book of life.

Need I say more? Yes. Not only was this perfect confidence felt, but it was shown; there was no false delicacy in Elizabeth Wilfred. Her natural mind, all broad simplicity, disdained—rather let me say, was incapable of—those arts, the privilege, some think them the *decus et tutamen*, the grace and safety of the sex, by which a lover is kept at a due distance. Having owned her love, having consented to be mine, her heart with all that it contained was unreservedly my own. To have wronged such a being as this, even in thought, what must the man be? Has this hand—this hand by which Sinclair fell—no words to write that shall describe him—not one? Sinclair, thou art indeed revenged!

For three days last past have I hovered over this sheet of paper, my pen between my fingers, unable to proceed, because unwilling to go on. And yet this unwillingness is no offspring of shame (although I am ashamed) or of fear (which I do not feel), lest my reader, more virtuous than myself, should condemn me for my want of virtue. It arises from an utter inability to reconcile the attempt of which I was guilty, and which—I must confess the truth—I had long meditated, with that opinion of Elizabeth which, I declare to heaven, was never impaired.

During some time—several weeks—I may date it from

the period that I had first detected a change in the manner of Lord Tyrconnel—my thoughts, if not my intentions, with regard to Elizabeth had undergone some alteration. As the chance of shortly making her my wife lessened, so, notions (notions merely at first) the tendency of which I may safely leave to the reader's discovery, begat, or themselves at length became, designs.

Can it be that, hating my mother like a curse, suspecting that it was at her unnatural instance that Lord Tyrconnel bore himself towards me with the insolent freedom of a superior, knowing that if she retained one soft—(she would call it weak) corner of her heart, it was devoted to Elizabeth Wilfred—can it be that this consideration tempted me to undermine, to destroy, to murder the happiness of a woman whom I loved better than my own soul? The supposition is monstrous. I was not so vile. I had been more likely to sluice the blood out of my own, because it had once flowed in my mother's veins.

Is it possible that Lord Tyrconnel's treatment, by wounding my self-respect, by outraging my pride, had so hunted, or to use a common word, had worried all honourable, all manly feeling from my bosom, that I must needs seek to propagate the villany, and secure at least one person in the world over whom I could play the tyrant? That, also, is a supposition not to be maintained.

Blind passion, a headstrong will, a heart not grown callous, but rendered heedless by paltry wrongs just at the time that it should have taken most heed—the weakness or the fate of violent natures—these it was that impelled me; these that have ever prompted me, urged me, goaded me, and ever to my own ruin.

Although I cannot so distinctly recall it to memory as to describe it, a change in my deportment towards Elizabeth must have attended the alteration of my views respecting her. My visits were as frequent as heretofore, but not so prolonged. I remember that I contemplated the departure of Gregory and his wife for Antigua with considerable satisfaction, which I also recollect (thus do we deceive ourselves!) having attributed to a regard for my friend, and a

solicitude for his happiness and prosperity. Gregory had obtained the lucrative appointment of collector of that island; and, it is true, I rejoiced at his good fortune; (for, after all, it seemed, Myte had only a few hundreds to leave; and his father would do little for him) but his wife, little Martha—how will she hate me, should she read this! was the constant companion of Elizabeth, her most intimate friend; and while she and her husband remained in England, I felt that I had less chance of success in my unworthy scheme. "Chance of success!" I had none that any calculation, founded upon her love, could hold out to me. The truth is, while Gregory and his wife were on the spot, I could not bring myself to play the scoundrel.

Let me not crawl over the scene that is at hand—crawl, I mean, as to speed; for to my part in the business the word were applicable.

One evening, my heart fortified and my spirits afloat with wine, I called upon Elizabeth Wilfred. She was not unaccustomed to see me in this state. I had this day put up with one more of my Lord Tyrconnel's safe insults, which had set my blood somewhat in motion; but it was not this that had led or driven me to the bottle. (Indeed, of late years, neither force nor persuasion was needed to cause me to enter a tavern.) I wanted a face that would not blush, or a face upon which, being flustered, no blush could be seen; and such a face I carried to the presence of Elizabeth.

She had often taken me to task in her sweet way, which sometimes tempted me to repeat a fault for the sake of the reproof, upon my intemperance. She feared lest it might grow into a habit; and would tell me of her father's extravagances when in his cups, (how many had I myself witnessed!) and express her belief that his love of convivial pleasures had impaired his fortune, or, at the least, had obstructed his advancement. The dear creature was mistaken. Steele was no drunkard, and gained more than he lost by his propensity—society, which was his delight, and the literary account to which he turned it, which was his fame and profit.

After this occasion, however, she said not a word to me

touching my state, although I believed I had never heretofore ventured into her presence so little master of myself; I had of late, indeed, noted a gravity in her looks when I approached her, for which no doubt there was ample reason, but for which, sometimes, I could almost have chidden her. I observed it now, and was displeased with it. A moment more, and the vapours cleared from my brain. Methought she never looked more beautiful—more lovely. Once, whenever I beheld her, I thought her heavenly; but now, heavenly as she was, she was not so in my eyes. Heaven and the thought of Heaven were gone forth from me.

"My dearest life," said I, "of what this world is composed, or rather, of what material the men and women are made who walk up and down in it, let those determine who have more experience or a nicer sagacity than your Richard Savage. Lord Tyrconnel, of whom I so long entertained the highest opinion, in whose friendship I placed the most implicit reliance, is no better than the vulgar herd. I have nothing further to expect from him but insult, unless I consent to do that which would make me worthy of submitting to it—unless I choose to become his creature."

This brought her to my side. She took my hand.

"How surprised—how shocked I am to hear this," she said, her eyes filling with tears; "now I know what it is that has been preying upon your mind for some time past; what it is that has occasioned the change in your manner I could not account for. But you must not vex yourself. Perhaps you are mistaken. Lord Tyrconnel has been very kind to you. Are you sure you do not misconstrue him? Indeed, Richard, you must forgive me; but I have often thought you are too hasty—too ready to take offence where none is intended. O Richard! how I wish——" she paused—a transient blush passed over her face, and was gone. Her eyes were full of tenderness.

"What does my love wish that, being in my power to grant or to obtain, she need an hour longer wish for?"

"That we were married, Richard——"

An ill-timed wish. I started; but she continued hurriedly:

"Because then you would give me more of your confi-

dence. But, perhaps, now you will do so. I would I knew how I could be of service. Tell me," she added earnestly, but quickly. "How cruel have you been! I see it now. It is your concern for me—your fear lest you should be unable to maintain me as you have done, that perplexes you—that makes you unhappy. This must not be. My poor dear father, before he died, committed me to the kindness and protection, should I require either, of his daughter, Lady Trevor, who wrote me only last week the sweetest letter, desiring to see her sister and namesake, as she called me. I will go to her until——" she blushed and patted my cheek; "come, you need feel no concern about me."

"My sweetest creature!" I exclaimed in a momentary transport, folding her in my arms. I was moved by her manner of saying this. In her tone was mingled the frankness of the friend with the tenderness of the wife.

"But," I resumed after a pause, "do you know that my mother, so I am informed by Lord Tyrconnel, has sworn that, should I marry you, I am never to expect any thing from her; but that if I relinquish all—hope—all," I stammered, "all intention of making you *my wife*," laying a stress upon the words, "she will consent to acknowledge me, and provide for me as her son."

(This was a suddenly begotten lie.)

"Poor lady!" returned Elizabeth, sighing, "I begin to feel that wicked people are the weakest of human beings. How mean are their oaths—their vows! I always loved her, and never, in my life, to my knowledge, injured her."

"Nor I; but you see how she pursues me. Is it worth reflection?"

"What?" she inquired.

"What my mother has conveyed to me through Lord Tyrconnel."

"Oh! I had ceased to think of it. No. Her threats, if they are threats, are idle, and mean nothing."

"And yet," I returned—and yet! I *cannot* live over again this portion of the shameful scene. The lie was pursued. "The die is cast," as there is some fellow to say in every tragedy I have read. I must on. During this

talk, I launched out against the institution of marriage, denouncing it as a springe to catch fools—as a device to fetter the free—as an obstruction to congenial souls. I summoned Nature by name—dear outraged mother, who is ever expected to conceal the wickedness of her children. All the wretched sophistry (if it even deserve that name) was broached, which, like the candle borne by a mock ghost, while it reveals the falsehood makes it the more hideous—all those protestations were employed, which carry their own refutation with them.

During my rambling and incoherent discourse, Elizabeth disengaged herself from my embrace, and at its conclusion gazed at me awhile with a look of blank surprise.

I smiled approval of my own doctrine. Hers was a sort of giddy laugh, shocking to remember, although at the time it seemed not so. She passed her hand across her brow two or three times, as though endeavouring to recall something to memory. "Is my Richard conscious of what he has been saying?" she uttered, at length; "he cannot be aware that he has made proposals to me—Good God! you cannot —*must* not intend—you do not know——"

"I know only that you are the most charming woman in the world," I exclaimed, clasping her rudely in my arms; "what I have said is spoken, Elizabeth. It must be so."

She burst from me, and bounded backward, not so much with a cry of fear as of horror. Her presence was full of grandeur, was glorious. Resentment, which I had never seen before, on her raised brow, in her flaming eyes, in her face, and heaving bosom, which, with her arms, were deepest crimson. She stood, the daughter of Sir Richard Steele, whose memory rushed, at that moment, to my heart, stabbing it through and through. A moment more, and all traces of anger were gone from her. Her eyes were bent upon me with a look of the most profound concern. No words could have conveyed the reproach of the look, which was not meant for reproach; nor did she utter a word, but hurried to the door.

I had been transfixed—spell-bound—a sad and sober villain, looking, however, simply a fool; but now I sprang

forward, and made an effort to detain her; but she passed from the room ere I could snatch her hand, and hastened up stairs.

I durst not follow her—I durst not even call to her and implore her forgiveness. Oh! that I had done so! Her heart was ever the seat of mercy, that scarce required prompting to forgive. Yet what avails? I had lost her respect for ever. Wantonly, and yet deliberately, I had dashed to pieces the image she had raised to my honour in the hallowed temple of her own pure and lovely mind.

I felt all this as I retreated—slunk to my chair. Good heavens! what fools are villains! Let me suppose, for an instant, that my vile scheme was practicable—that such was the love of this woman for me, that the world were "well lost" at my bidding. Still, was this the time to have urged my dishonourable proposals? Her father, to whom she was tenderly attached, not three months dead—her sister, Lady Trevor, (this I knew before,) prepared to receive her into her house as a sister—my connection with Lord Tyrconnel loosening daily—when unloosed, indigence or scantily paid labour before me—this was a moment of all others—(I, forsooth, believed none could be more propitious) the last to be chosen—the last that any cool-headed rascal would choose.

It cannot be called reflection when thoughts become objects—images of the mind, standing before it with an equal prominence. Mrs. Brett, Steele, Tyrconnel, Lady Hertford arose upon my mind—and Sinclair. Him I cursed—and for what? Because, like a bold and open robber, he had sought to do that, which I, like a cowardly and sneaking thief, had just been attempting. Yes—my blood boiled at the thought that he had presumed to meditate wrong against this divine creature. I wrought consolation for myself out of the miserable belief that, while I could feel such warmth of indignation against Sinclair, I myself could not have sinned beyond all hope of forgiveness. And yet I cursed myself, too; but while I did so (oh, human nature!) it appeared to me that these curses were, or ought to be, efficacious towards securing my pardon.

I was aroused out of my half-contrite, half-sullen meditations, by the entrance of a person into the room. It was a lady. I started to my feet. Yes, my Elizabeth, generous and noble girl! must know that I could never design to insult her—that it was a sudden frenzy, repented as soon as passed. I advanced with open hands to meet her. I was mistaken. The film before my eyes had prevented me from recognising Mrs. Phillips.

I recoiled in extreme disappointment, which must have taken the form of disgust. This lady was a most impassive person, a most imperturbable woman. She perpetually presented the appearance of a piece of machinery—like a watch wound up every morning or night. She advanced upon me.

"Madam," said I, "pardon me; but I did not expect to see you. Where is Miss Wilfred?"

"She is retired to her own chamber. Neither had I any expectation of seeing you, Mr. Savage. I thought you were gone."

"Miss Wilfred will be down stairs presently, madam: I must see her."

"Not to-night," replied she, coldly. "I fear, sir, you have said something to Miss Wilfred—that there is something wrong."

"Something wrong!" What a formal, heartless, solemn person. "Something wrong!" She was correct, however. All was wrong.

"I have deeply offended Miss Wilfred, I acknowledge it. Yet, I trust, should she permit me to see her, I may offer such reparation.—My dear madam, you will, I know, intercede for me?"

"I know not in what you have offended," she replied. "I know only that if, as I suspect—pardon me, sir—you have very grievously insulted the young lady, to-night is not the time to explain or excuse your conduct. Quick repentance and forgiveness lead to as quick a renewal of the offence."

"My dear madam, permit me to deny—" I desisted. All remonstrance was useless when that lady's mouth was open.

"Miss Wilfred," she continued, "came into my room about an hour since, and throwing herself into my arms, sobbed upon my bosom, that I thought her heart would break. It pained mine, sir, deeply, to see her in such distress; for she is a most excellent and worthy young lady. I could not prevail upon her to tell me the cause of her grief. She said that *now* she was the most miserable of women—that she had been unfortunate before; but that now she was wretched beyond hope. Now, Mr. Savage, if you have been the cause of this—"

"I have—I have—" I exclaimed vehemently—"I have been a madman, madam; but I am not a villain. The dearest creature!—Mrs. Phillips—I must pass you—I must go to her—I must fling myself at her feet—"

"You must not to-night," she replied, placing her back against the door, and holding forth her hands, "I will not have Miss Wilfred agitated to-night. She is in her own room. Nay, sir, you shall not pass."

The woman was too strong for me, or for such force as I could employ against a woman.

"For God's sake, madam, hear me. I am at this moment half mad—"

"I see you are; and, therefore, altogether unfit for Miss Wilfred's society this evening."

I thought this cold creature would have relented; for she put on a smile of compassion.

"Come, sir, calm yourself, and go home. To-morrow morning you will be better prepared to meet Miss Wilfred."

It was in vain to wheedle or to remonstrate, although I did both for a considerable time. One might, with as much success, have attempted to mollify the statue of Queen Elizabeth. Mrs. Phillips was inexorable. I was fain, therefore, to retire, which, after all, when I had submitted to do so, I believe was the best. I was so utterly ashamed of myself, that I know not how I could have stood before her presence.

I did not, however, go home, but to my tavern, which had already supplied me with courage to undertake my villanous project, and must now impart consolation to me

on its defeat. I stayed there very late. How I got home, I did not know until afterwards.

On the following morning, as I came down stairs, Lord Tyrconnel pushed open a door, and in an insolently imperious voice, called out, from the inner part of the room,—

"That is you, Mr. Savage, I believe. Here! I want you."

I was in no humour, on that morning, to put up with insults; and, indeed, not to have offended me, this Lord must have used very choice language. I looked in at the door, with no smooth brow, and with an eye in no wise amiable.

"You spoke?"

"I want you."

"You want manners. Perhaps you have mislaid them. They cannot, I hope, be far off. Let me shut the door upon you and them, lest they escape. You will, probably, find them before I return."

He turned round, for when I looked in upon him he was standing with his back towards me; but I closed the door suddenly, and left the house.

It was not long ere I reached the house of Mrs. Phillips. The servant ushered me into Elizabeth's drawing-room. I waited her coming with some anxiety, and in no small trepidation. How would she receive me? I almost dreaded to conjecture.

Mrs. Phillips at last presented herself. I saluted her with great gravity. She handed me a sealed letter, in silence.

"What is this, madam?" I faltered, and must have turned pale. I felt the blood recede from my heart; I knew the seal too well. I durst not glance at the superscription. "What is the meaning of this? Where is Elizabeth?"

There was an alteration in the woman's face. There was sorrow upon it.

"Miss Wilfred is gone," she replied, "and has left that letter for you."

"Gone! Whither?"

"That letter, sir, will perhaps inform you."

"True."

I retired to the window, and with shaking hands broke open the letter, which I read as well as those hands would let me. Every word a viper in my bosom: yet all sweetness, gentleness, forgiveness; but forgiveness as of the dying to the survivor, who shall no more be seen. I could have burst into an agony of weeping, for my spirits had been over wrought; but I swallowed down the weakness which I feared Mrs. Phillips had detected. Crushing the letter together, I thrust it into my pocket and turned upon her.

"Woman!" I exclaimed, "you are a party to this. You know where Miss Wilfred is gone."

Her hands placidly revolved one over the other. I could have wrenched the fingers from her freezing paws.

"Speak, woman," I continued, "I must not be trifled with. You are in the secret. You shall tell me where Miss Wilfred is gone."

"You do not well, sir," replied Mrs. Phillips, "in addressing me so disrespectfully. I am a woman, it is true, but no inferior. Mr. Phillips was a gentleman, and as such, I——"

"Good Heavens, madam, do not torture me. I beg your pardon. At another time I shall be happy to concede all you may require in favour of Mr. Phillips's pretensions, or of your own; but now——"

"That is quite sufficient, sir. I do not know where Miss Wilfred has betaken herself."

"You do not? But this of course. Ha! ha! Madam!"

She made me a low curtsey.

"Upon my *honour*, Mr. Savage, I do not. *That* was never yet brought in question."

I dashed my clenched fist against my forehead.

"Base fool, and wretched fool that I am! But this must not be. I will discover her retreat."

I drew my companion to a chair, and myself sat down.

"Now, madam, tell me all you know, I beseech you. Miss Wilfred told you of her intended flight—her departure?"

"She did, last night, and I strove to dissuade her from

it; but she shook her head, and said 'it must be—must be—*must* be;'—repeating the words three times; nor could all I urged prevail on her even to defer her intention. In the morning early, as soon as it was light, she was stirring. She knocked at my chamber door, and requested that I would permit the servant to order her a coach."

"You torture me by this trivial particularity," said I; "You let her depart without asking, without insisting upon knowing where she intended to go?"

"I did, sir. It was not for me to presume to do anything of the kind."

"Good God, Mrs. Phillips! have you any feeling—have you a heart?"

"Mr. Savage," she replied, stiffly, "Miss Wilfred is a lady of virtue and honour, and of discretion. I doubt not, however extraordinary the step she has taken may appear, she has good reason for it. I dare say, sir, in your calmer moments you, yourself, must acknowledge that. I fear, sir, any explanation to you of her reasons is superfluous. Your letter, of course, is silent as to her intended destination?"

"It is.—Oh! Mrs. Phillips! I said last night, I was not a villain, but I lied: mad, it is true, I may be, but so are all villains. I have offended Miss Wilfred beyond hope of forgiveness. She has renounced me. I have lost her respect for ever. She has ceased to love me."

"I hope you may be able to offer such an excuse for your conduct, as may induce Miss Wilfred to pardon you," said Mrs. Phillips. "You are mistaken," she added, after a pause, laying her hand gently on my arm, "if you imagine that she no longer loves you. Had you seen her this morning when she took her leave of me, you had not said so. She had drawn out her purse, sir, but checked herself suddenly; 'I was going to do a very foolish, wrong thing, madam,' she said; 'I was about to ask you how much rent was owing, that I might pay it you, but I must not do that. It would offend Mr. Savage. I would not, for the world, he should think I harbour—' here her voice failed her. 'O madam,' turning to me, her eyes filled with tears, and her voice struggling through sobs, 'that

the world should have spoiled such a noble nature as his!' She wrung my hands between her own. 'You will tell him,'—she hesitated—'no, this letter will be sufficient.' She tore herself from me, and hurried into the coach."

"Pray leave me, Mrs. Phillips," said I, "for a few minutes."

"Compose yourself, sir," said she, kindly. "Tell me you will do so, if I leave you."

"Yes, yes—I will."

I thought I was going to roar like a great lubberly lad, but I could not. I drew the letter from my pocket, imprecating curses on my head for having so rudely deformed it. Again and again I read it. "Dearest Richard"—no hope could be drawn thence;—the letter itself forbade it. Had it breathed resentment, I had had less reason to despair. I must discover whither she had fled—throw myself at her feet, nor leave her till she promised my pardon.

I left the house abruptly, nothing doubting that, before the day was over, I should prove successful in my search, and be blessed with her forgiveness. My spirits revived as her lovely and beloved idea filled my mind. I pictured to myself the rapture of a reconciliation, all contrition on my part, all tenderness and mercy on hers; and now, for the first time in my life, began to apprehend the luxury of a lover's quarrel.

Vain and senseless beast that I was, not to have known, not to have felt, that my pardon, had I obtained it, would have been an argument of Elizabeth's weakness, rather than of her virtue; and that mercy, though it may forgive—forgiveness being the quality, the essence of its nature—has yet no power to absolve. But it was not to be.

She had few friends or acquaintances: these, my memory readily recalled, and to these in turn I hastened. Lord Trevor was out of town, nor had Elizabeth been to his house. Lady Hertford was at home, and listened to the story I forged upon the instant with cold incredulity. She had not seen Miss Wilfred. She added that when she did see her, she feared it was probable she should hear something concerning Mr. Savage that would induce her never

to see *him* again. She had heard of my wild pranks at taverns; and was quite certain I had done something to affront Miss Wilfred.

I was in no humour—indeed, I felt I had no time to listen—to the objurgatory speeches of this very correct lady, and took my departure with some abruptness. The same want of success awaited me everywhere. No trace of my fugitive was to be discovered. I went back to Mrs. Phillips, and compelled her to promise that, should Miss Wilfred return, (which, on my way to her house I indulged a hope she might yet do,) she would immediately send a messenger for me.

I awaited his coming with the utmost anxiety, until nine o'clock, when, unable to bear the suspense, the agony of my own thoughts, I flung out of Lord Tyrconnel's house, and once more presented myself before Mrs. Phillips. No tidings. Then, when I could no longer expect them, I cursed myself for having expected, and vented such a flourish of execrations, as made the good woman shudder. These execrations were not confined to my own person. What, were they then extended to Elizabeth? Heaven forbid that could ever have been! No. But Mrs. Brett partook largely of them; and Lord Tyrconnel had his share, and I am not altogether certain that Lady Hertford might not have claimed one or two.

The truth is, I had eaten nothing all day but a small biscuit, and had drunk largely—a ha'porth of bread to an intolerable quantity of sack. Wine taken upon an empty stomach, and under the influence of strong excitement, is not favourable to a hopeful or exulting view of things, or to the temper that calls them to its ken. I mentally connected Mrs. Brett and Lord Tyrconnel with Elizabeth and with her flight, to which—so it seemed to my warped fancy—they had lent their countenance. I brooded over the pleasure, the exultation they must undoubtedly feel when they heard, and they could not fail soon of hearing, that she had left, they would say *escaped*, me. To my mother's treatment of me, I referred this amongst the other calamities that had attended me through life. Fool!

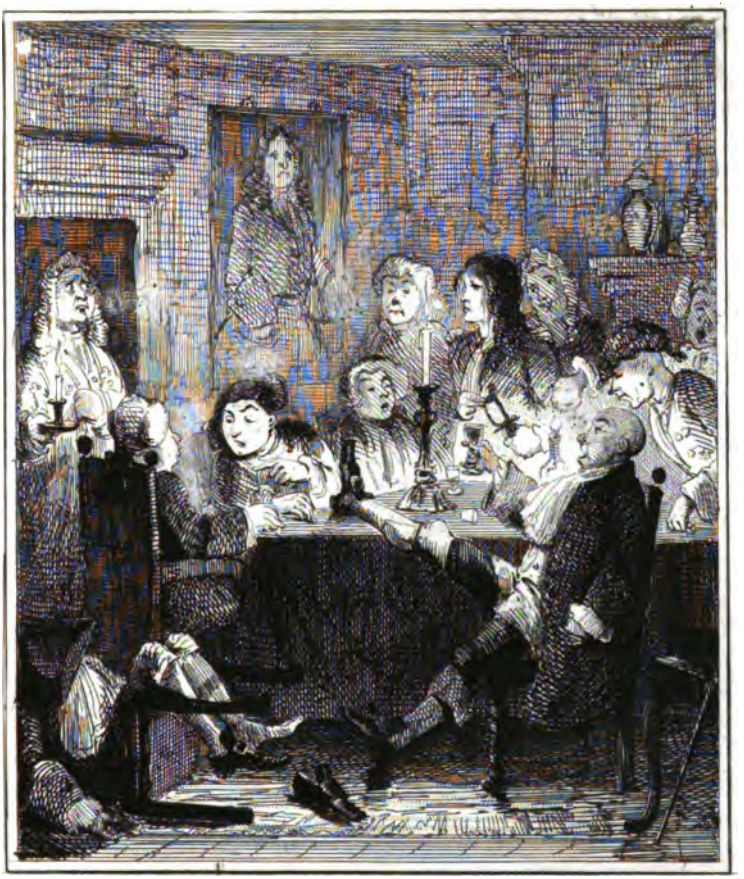
but this has been my besetting weakness—call it sin. As though, had I been so minded, I could not have blunted every shaft of the many her malice winged against me. Laughed them to scorn—I have done that; but it has often been with a writhing lip, and a brow on which the dew of pain, of anguish stood. Oh, too late!—too late to regret what I might have been, and what I am, and what I am still to be—one more fool in the flood that hurries fools to oblivion!

In no pleasant mood, I carried myself away to my accustomed tavern, but I dismissed all appearance of emotion at the threshold. I never brought with me into company—unless it were into company towards whom it was my purpose to show it—any sullenness of humour or brutal moroseness. I met there several of the wild and waggish rascals with whom I had caroused on the previous night. They rallied me upon my state of helpless drunkenness, and reminded me, or rather told me—for I had utterly forgotten it—of a general invitation I had given to the company, to spend the night with me at the house of Lord Tyrconnel.

That invitation must have arisen out of a determination which was now uppermost, that I would take the earliest opportunity of showing his Lordship that I looked upon the use of his saloon, the services of his footman, and the contents of his wine-cellar, as absolutely at my disposal. Two years since, he had in express terms bidden me so to consider them. It squared with my present humour exactly, therefore, to be held to my engagement, which I professed myself in readiness to fulfil on the instant.

Away we went, some half drunk already, others hastening to be so, eight or ten of us hallooing through the streets, intolerant of the watch and of every obstruction, whether of animal matter or of physical substance, that impeded or seemed to impede our onward progress.

Arrived at the house, a vigorous application of the knocker enforced immediate admittance. We burst like a torrent into the hall. I summoned the butler before me, and pronounced my orders. He remonstrated, but in vain. His were later instructions than, in my presence, had been



The usual of Savage & his friends at Lord Byrconnels.

London Richard Bentley & Son 1896

given to him. I reminded him of Lord Tyrconnel's injunctions to obey me as himself. He was fain in this instance to do so. I passed with my friends upstairs.

I have no distinct remembrance of what took place after we had been provided with wine: plenty there was, and of the best. It was a scene of disorderly merriment. The sounds of uproar, of wild laughter, and songs and catches, of extravagance, of licentious nonsense, still ring in my ears. Wigs awry, or wrong-side foremost—heads without wigs—long doomsday faces—mouths that seemed as though they would laugh till doomsday—these float before my vision, and these no doubt there were.

In the very perplexity of the confusion—at the very moment when each man may be supposed to have been, and probably was, talking to his neighbour upon a subject which he did not understand, and in a language that was unintelligible, into the room walks, or rather stalks, my Lord Tyrconnel.

When I discerned him and a phantom of himself, looming in the distance, which was not, I believe, till he had been a minute in the room, I called aloud to him (this and all that took place till the company broke up, was told me afterwards by one of the party):

"You are welcome, Lord Tyrconnel, very welcome; although not invited, you are, I say, very welcome."

To this he answered: "I believe, indeed, Mr. Savage, had I been invited, I should not have been more welcome, or less;" then turning to one of the gentlemen: "Mr. Barker, I am surprised to see you here. You know the terms upon which Mr. Savage holds a footing in my house. Let me tell you, after to-morrow, he shall have no further opportunity of disgracing me or himself here. He is too drunk to listen to reason or to hear resentment to-night. Prevail upon your friends to go. It is no fault of theirs. I should be sorry to affront gentlemen in my own house, which, however, I must do if they are not speedily gone. My servants have called the watch."

I think I heard the conclusion of this sentence; for, it seems, I arose and made toward the speaker. Barker, how-

ever, held me tightly, till Lord Tyrconnel was gone from the room, when I succeeded in breaking from his grasp, and away I staggered in quest of the insolent disturber of my social enjoyment.

I recollect nothing that followed. When I awoke next morning, I found myself in my own bed, and by degrees attained to a partial remembrance of the last night's scene, of its interruption, and of the presence of him by whom it had been interrupted.

But a matter of greater moment now solicited my mind. I must renew my search after Elizabeth. Dear, lovely, cruel girl! I struck my aching head with my clenched hand. She had hurried me into the debauch, and to her its consequences must be ascribed. "Its consequences?" and what were they? Did my heart fail me?—Was my spirit gone?—Where was my pride—my dignity? "By the soul of man! as Lemery would say," cried I, springing from my bed; "we shall see—*he* shall see that!"

The wine I had drunk was still strong within me. Heart-sick—vague—with a head like an auction room, a confusion of strange things and noises—I dressed myself hastily, and ordered breakfast in my own room. Scarce was it despatched, when a servant waited upon me with "Lord Tyrconnel's service to you, sir, and will be obliged if you will attend him in his study, at your earliest leisure."

"I was going out, but will attend his lordship directly."

"Vastly civil! plaguy polite! The sunshine before the storm. Let us see." I muttered thus as I descended the stairs.

His lordship was standing to receive me. He bowed gloomily as I advanced, his brows lowering; but he was very pale, with rage I conjectured, and my conjecture was right. We seated ourselves at opposite corners of one end of the table. I awaited his communication.

"Mr. Savage—hem!—" he cleared his throat, for his voice was somewhat husky—"Mr. Savage, it is time we should understand each other—that we should come to a *perfect* understanding."

"With all my heart—if we have not already done so.

I believe for some time past, I have understood your lordship perfectly."

"I know your insolent tongue, Savage," he began.

"Know your own, and check it," I returned. "But we begin too warmly. Pray, my Lord, be calm. I will be so —I am so."

But I was not, although I appeared very calm. My hands pressed between my knees, my body inclined towards him, my face looking into his with an air of mock deference. He could scarce bear it with patience.

"What took place last night," he resumed, "has decided me as to the course I ought to pursue. That is settled. And now, sir," raising his voice, "since it were vain—useless—to appeal to your feelings, let me address myself to your memory. Two years ago, you were in great distress; nay, you cannot deny it. Touched by your misfortunes, I took you into my house, I allowed you a pension——"

"These *I*'s are lies!" I exclaimed in a voice of ill-suppressed fury. "*You* took—*you* allowed—!"

"Lies, Savage," he replied as furiously; "lies!—this language—"

"You must hear it, Lord Tyrconnel. But stay; it will be my turn to speak by-and-by."

"I took you, I repeat; I allowed you two hundred a-year; I made you my friend; I made myself your friend, and I have proved myself one; and for this kindness, these benefits, what return have I had?"

"Return!" I answered with a "pish!" of profound contempt. "Return! and what return, good jobbing Samaritan, did you expect? What requital did you require? Embracement of knees, licking or kissing of shoes, a bated breath when wise Sir Oracle proclaimed the hidden truth that dogs wore tails and sometimes wagged 'em? Return!"

"None of these, sir, did I expect. These would have been servility."

"And what, then, *did* you expect? Pardon me, I am curious. Your expectations, if you please."

"Gratitude!" he thundered.

There was something excessively ludicrous in the inflated

appearance of the man, as his one portentous word was discharged at me. Such a superior look, as of a benefactor deceived or betrayed. I could not but smile and shake my head lightly, with as portentous an "Oh!" for a reply.

"Look'ee, Savage," he continued, flinging himself towards me over the table; "I have been mistaken in you; but we do not part until I have made you feel, that at last I know you. I have heard, sir, of the low, degrading company you have been keeping—of the debts you have contracted—of your profligacy—of——"

"Ho, ho! my Lord; you have paid spies, have you? or perhaps the two hundred a-year pinched you, and you have done that creditable work yourself. Take care, my lord, I open *my* book presently; *your* account is to come."

"D—nation!—what do you mean, sir?" he replied, with a fierce, brow-beating air. "Your book, indeed! Where are my books—the books I gave you? Do you blush?—that is more than I looked for. Are they not pawned, or sold? Why, I have seen some of 'em, stamped with my arms, on the book-stalls."

This could not be denied. I had pawned and sold. But what was this to him? The books were mine.

"The world's temptations, my lord, are strong," said I, "and my resistance is weak. I have known some fellows who would dispute with St. Peter at the gates of heaven about the length of his key, and refuse to enter till the point was decided;—I am not one of those. When I arrive at pleasure's gate, I scruple not the key; nay, I would e'en pick the lock, were the key not forthcoming."

Though I said this as a player might have delivered it in a comedy—as airily, as pleasantly—yet, never was my choler raised to a higher pitch.

"Have you done?" I demanded. "Are there any more counts in your indictment? Am I to speak?"

"I have more, much more to say—or had," he replied; "for to what purpose are my words?"

"Then spare yourself the trouble of uttering, and me the weariness of hearing them. Now, O Lord Tyrconnel!" and I leaned forward on my elbows and gazed steadfastly

in his face, "you said I blushed just now—perhaps I did. But if you have one blush left in your body, and what I am about to say to your heart do not drag it thence up into your cheeks, you are more despicable, even, than I now believe you, and pronounce you to be."

He would have arisen, but I laid my hand firmly upon his wrist, and proceeded,

"*You* took me into your house—*you* allowed me two hundred a year! Do you think I do not *know* that to Mrs. Brett I am indebted for the allowance, and that she reimburses you for my maintenance?"

He started up. "By Heaven! a more pernicious lie——"

"Than you would utter were you to deny this, Lord Tyrconnel, by Heaven! was never uttered."

He sprang to his feet, his eyes flashing fire which could not blast or singe me. He would have felled me to the ground, but I caught his arm.

"Infernal villain, and liar!" he exclaimed in ungovernable rage.

"Words, my lord, which I will exchange. Dolt and knave! and to your teeth, which you may gnash as you will, I say it—base hound!"

He wrested himself from me and rushed into the middle of the room, drawing his sword.

"Now sir, or cur," he exclaimed, "cur, fed by this hand which shall chastise your vile insolence, come on. When I have punished you, I will kick you back again into the streets, whence I took you—to prowl, as you have done."

I advanced towards him, my hand upon my sword hilt. I released my hold upon it and surveyed him, for a moment, my hands clasped before me.

"Oh!" I exclaimed with a grim chuckle, drawing myself up, "oh! that I had, in this hand, at this moment, every vile farthing of the money my mother has disbursed to you on my account, that I might dash it into that round, noble, booby face of thine! But if fortune has played me such a devil's trick as to have cursed me with a weight of obligation to so poor a swaggerer as thou art, run your sword into my body and let out a life which is altogether too

cursed, in that it has been prolonged by thee! I give you but a moment to consider," dashing open my waistcoat, and approaching him; "are you ready?"

"I am no murderer, as you are, Savage," he replied, "think of Sinclair."

"You make me do so—as sorry a coxcomb," I returned, drawing my sword. "Think you of his fate, and avoid it if you can."

At it we went like two devils, hating each other for the sins of each. He was an expert fencer. After a few passes, his sword pierced my waistcoat, raking the flesh of my right side. At this moment servants rushed into the room.

"I have wounded you," said he.

"Not with your sword yet," I replied rushing upon him, and closing with him. "Off, fellows," to the servants, "or you shall carry work to the doctor." I said this, when I had wrenched the sword from Lord Tyrconnel's hand.

"My lord, I pursue not my advantage. I shall not hurt you. This has gone far enough. Promise me, on your honour, that you will not suffer your servants to offer me any indignity."

He bowed in silence.

"Let one of them call me a coach. I myself shall look to what is my own, in my late apartments."

So saying I broke both the swords, and threw them under the grate.

"For all you did for me, Lord Tyrconnel," said I, stepping up to him, and addressing him solemnly, "if any kindness—benefit if you please, *did* ever proceed from you—while it was done with delicacy—for all your favours, (is that your word?) I thank you. But, that you insulted a gentleman in distress; that you took every occasion you could find, and made many occasions you could not, to wound my feelings, to irritate my pride, to embitter my existence, when I was no longer necessary to your pleasure, agreeable to your vanity, or subservient to your caprice,—for this, upon my soul and from it, I scorn and despise you."

With this, I stalked away, leaving him, in my eyes and, perhaps, in his own, a very pitiful figure.

My wardrobe was soon packed, my small property collected. Splendour—competence—these are very well. God be with them, and those that have them. But while I had them—I say this when years have passed, during which the verb "to have" unless it be of all, nearly, that was wretched, was out of my dictionary—while I had them, I repeat, God knows I purchased them too dearly.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN ABRUPT DETERMINATION TO MAKE AN END OF HIS NARRATIVE, AND A PARTIAL DISCLOSURE OF SEVERAL WRETCHED PARTICULARS WHICH SEEM TO MAKE IT EXPEDIENT SO TO DO.

It is time this farce or this tragedy—to me it seems the one, to the reader it may appear the other—it is time, I say, it should have an end. In the first place, I am weary of my task; in the second, I learn from my friend Pope, that my sojourn in this gaol is about to close—the only place in which I should care to continue it; and, lastly, what I have to tell, were I to relate it in full, could be neither profitable or instructive to the reader, nor pleasant to myself.

Before I left London, a fellow, a parson, one Miller, a heavy farce-writer, introduced me upon the stage in a most dull performance yclept "The Coffee House." The joke was my wretchedness of poverty, and I was exhibited in an extremely shabby coat. The piece was no exception from the ruling fate of this Miller's stage productions—it was damned for its dulness; but, I was told, there were some few in the playhouse, who laughed at the paltriness. To such alone—whose souls are far more shabby than any coat that ever hung from my shoulders, (and, to say truth, I have worn some until that they remained any longer pendulous was a marvel,) to such earthworms only could the recital of all that I have undergone, since my quarrel with Tyrconnel, prove acceptable.

For, if any man of feeling, however morbid, could endure

to write, what man of common humanity could bear to read, a long and sickening detail of sordid and squalid miseries borne, with whatever fortitude, by a man of birth and of abilities? Yes, however little they may be shown in this hurried narrative, abilities the world has attested that I once possessed.

> "O memory! thou soul of joy and pain,
> Thou actor of our passions o'er again—"

thou actor, likewise, of our sufferings, what if I, ghastly fiendish chronicler, were to summon thee to my side, and invoking thy assistance to the hideous task, retrace, woe by woe, what even now I shudder to fling a moment's backward glance upon? The days without food—the nights without lodging—the nights in which I *have* lodged—with thieves, vagabonds, beggars like myself—equals in misery, huddled together amongst the comforting ashes of a glass-house!—What if I were to relieve the narrative by presenting the scenes that I have witnessed, scenes in which I have borne a part, in night-cellars—brawls, perchance, between ruffians each of whom had sent a soul to heaven with knife or bullet?

Well, this might be done, nor should I so much mind doing this. "Misery makes a man acquainted with strange bedfellows," but after all, misery—the misery of poverty—is no crime, although many good people in this good world, until they themselves become of the number of the wanting ones, will have it to be so.

But along with it to portray the insult I have borne, compelled to bear it—the devices, the stratagems, the pretences I have been forced to employ that I might keep a wretched soul in a wretched body a while longer—the petty sums I have borrowed from paltry lenders—the applications that have been refused—the demands for repayment I have been unable to fulfil—until to lend Richard Savage was to bestow, and kindness took the name of charity, or, which is more frightful, of pity.—O my God! no more. That must not be set forth—by me.

Enough that I have said thus much. Despise me,

reader,—you will—you may: but for the love of heaven do not pity me.

Yet will I furnish a brief sketch of the leading events of my life, from the day I left Lord Tyrconnel's house to the morning of my departure from London.

Lord Tyrconnel, shortly after our quarrel, with a baseness all his own, under pretence that I owed him money, that is to say, converting the allowance I had received from him into a debt, seized upon every article I possessed, even to my clothes at my new lodgings. I was speedily reduced once more to want. My best friends, Mrs. Oldfield and Mr. Wilks, had died a few months before. My pension, therefore, ceased; and assistance was at an end from a man, who never refused me a guinea in his life, and whose beneficence, sometimes declined, was never to be denied.

My spirit, however, fell not with my fortune. As long as I could frequent coffee-houses I was never weary of exposing Lord Tyrconnel's meanness with all the malice of my resentment, and of ridiculing his pompous arrogance and solemn folly with all the virulence of my wit. He strove to retort, but with no signal success. I bore away the palm; for men are more easily pleased than convinced. When, at length, he brought hired bullies to the coffee-house to take me unawares as I stepped out of it, and dared not meet me on the following day, when I waited upon him to learn his pleasure, his case was hopeless. Even his sycophants fell from him; but whether in despair of his morals or of his money I cannot undertake to say.

In the meanwhile, I did not forget my mother. Prudence might have whispered to me—but when were prudence and Richard Savage on speaking terms?—that I should endeavour to seek after a continuance of her bounty. But, no;—so inveterate was my indignation against Lord Tyrconnel, that I would not venture the proposal of any terms of accommodation with her, lest he should have the satisfaction of thwarting them. Nor could I again submit to the degradation—so I now felt it to be—of attempting to extort money from her by threats. My purpose now was to make her feel; and the method of doing so that

first suggested itself to me was similar to that I had before resolved upon putting in practice. But a little reflection joined to my past experience—so far as I had had means of knowing it—of this woman's nature, sufficed to convince me that the end I had in view would be best attained by rendering her contemptible rather than odious, and by making her a thing to be shamed and shunned, rather than a prodigy to be feared and gazed upon.

A poem, entitled "The Bastard," was the result; and never was bolt shot that went more directly to its aim. These verses have been said to contain vigour, to possess feeling—to be at once spirited and pathetic. That I regard not. They made that proud heart quail and sink for very shame, whilst mine leaped for very joy—they made that head hide itself, whilst mine was lifted to the stars. I could almost have hugged her, when I thought of the transport with which, for the first and last time, she had been the means of filling me; but not having her near me, I hugged myself.

In the course of a few months, when the blaze of admiration had died away, and my acquaintances began to think more of their own pockets and less of mine, I was again reduced to sound the depths and shallows of human misery. Depths are there, sometimes, when you look for shallows, and shallows when you expect depths. At length Mr. Strong of the Post-Office—my friend (*once* he was a true one) took me as an inmate into his house, and kindly entertained me. The concluding paragraph of my poem of "The Bastard" contained an eulogium upon Queen Caroline, with a pleading hope, artfully and pathetically expressed, that in her gracious beneficence I should find what fate or fortune had denied to me—the tenderness of a mother. The death of the Rev. Mr. Eusden, the poet laureate, happening about this time, my friend Strong urgently pressed me to follow up the petition implied in those verses, and humbly to solicit the vacant laurel. With a providence that seldom characterized my proceedings, I had, some months since, made application to the Duke of Dorset and the Earl of Middlesex to submit my preten-

sions to that honour to his Majesty. They had done so, and had assured me they brought it from the king's own lips that when the vacancy occurred, the office would certainly be conferred upon me.

"Put not thy trust in princes," is a piece of advice as old as Solomon who offered it, and who was himself a prince. His dependants, probably, had cheapened the advice before he set it down. When, on the death of Eusden, I presumed to recall his promise to the remembrance of his Majesty, I was told that the king had utterly forgotten, nay, doubted that he had made it. It was added, by way of consolation, that even had he not done so, I had been in no better a position, the bestowal of the office being a privilege pertaining of right to the Lord Chamberlain, who was determined upon this occasion to exercise it, and who had another destination for the laurel. Now, had the bays lighted on the brows of Thomson, of Aaron Hill—of Dyer, or even of Mallet, I had rejoiced—at least I had sat me down contented;—but when, oh ridiculous infamy! they fell flabby and faded over the ears of Colley Cibber!—astonished and amazed at first, at last there was no help for it, but I must join in the vociferous laughter so uncommon a spectacle universally excited. Cibber, that odd, conceited, pinch-nosed face of his creaming and mantling—his poetical merit at length conspicuously and handsomely acknowledged,—thrumming the Pindaric lyre! The ghost of Dryden was appeased. From Dryden to Shadwell was not so practical an exemplification of the bathos, as from Shadwell to Cibber.

Disappointed as I was, I was not altogether discouraged; but addressed a copy of verses to the queen under the title of "The Volunteer Laureate." This greatly enraged Cibber, whose blushing honours were yet red upon him, and who denied my right to assume a title that had devolved to him. I retorted, by protesting that my principal reason for so doing was to preserve the title from utter contempt, to which his laborious handiwork would otherwise consign it. He rejoined, and was unanswered by me. Would that a greater man than myself had felt a like contempt of his

inferiors in ability which he was always expressing of his superiors in rank, then had we seen no such mournful sight as a controversy between Colley Cibber and Alexander Pope.

Meanwhile, the queen was pleased to accept my verses very graciously, and to order that the sum of fifty pounds should be paid to me annually. Her Majesty accompanied the gift with a permission, which was a command, that I should every year supply a similar tribute. This pension I received till her death. Between the time of its grant and of its surcease, beside the annual panegyrics, which, to say the truth, were hardly better than Cibber's better paid performances, I wrote two poems of some length and pretensions;—"The Progress of a Divine," and "On Public Spirit with regard to Public Works." For the former I was prosecuted, on the charge of immorality; but the indictment was indignantly dismissed by Sir Philip Yorke, who paid me many compliments on the moral tenour of my writings. For the latter I was hunted by the printer, (for the sale of the poem was not even equal to its merit, which I cannot but confess was small indeed,) who nearly succeeded in placing me in one of those public works which public spirit had erected. The one designed for me was that, I believe, whose walls are washed by the sable stream of Fleet Ditch; but a part of his demand down, and the rest "when I could," assuaged him.

No life of Richard Savage must be written by him, short as was the portion of it in which he was so happy as to enjoy thy company, without a notice, Samuel Johnson, of thee! And this, not because an ostentatious acknowledgment of my friendship for thee can do thee honour; but that for my own sake I must declare how much I have been honoured by thy friendship!

I was introduced to Johnson by Cave, for whom I had, from time to time, written various trifles in the Gentleman's Magazine. Cave had often paid me the compliment of expressing a very high opinion of my judgment both of writings and of men, and more than once, before Johnson and myself met, had evinced a strong eagerness to hear what I thought of him. His own impression was, that he would

prove extremely useful to him. Useful! Oh Cave, Cave! But how couldst thou know a man of genius, who hadst never seen one? Even now, I dare be sworn, thou thinkest him the strangest mortal! "He has parts, certainly." Of which thou gladly availest thyself, and rightly. But dost thou not sometimes think within thyself, very much within thyself, for walls have ears, and even thy stone walls have heard strange things, I warrant thee—dost thou not, now and then, mutter to thyself, "This man, had he but a *proper spirit* to assert himself, need not be at my beck and call, to do this, that, and the other, for any thing I choose to pay him. Why doesn't he get himself a periwig, and garnish himself with a sword, and go amongst the wits, and attach himself to a patron? His 'London' has gone before him. A noodle! I have no patience with him, or shouldn't have, if I hadn't profit of him. I have known men of less abilities make a very pretty figure."

Most true, honest Cave, and so thou hast. Make much of him, therefore, while thou canst. The stubborn dog is not to be made into a pretty figure. It is time which is to shape him for immortality.

His sturdy sense of independence must submit to what further I have to say of him. I found him manly, humane, and sincere; learned, without ostentation; when serious, without moroseness; when cheerful, without levity. My life had passed among men—his had lain among books; yet he had, and has, more wit than any man I ever knew, and a more comprehensive, and, at the same time, a more accurate knowledge of human nature. We soon became intimate. He regarded me, and I loved him. We were both alike miserably poor; and poverty is a strong cement to friendship. How oft have we—I was going to use Tyrconnel's word—prowled, but no, paraded the streets from midnight, till morn "in amice gray" arose and lighted upon the lids of sluggish slaves a-bed (what cared we for beds who had none?) and bade them rise. No murmurings, no repinings were ours at dispensations of Providence, at unequal distributions of worldly goods and blessings; but in their stead, philosophy, literature, politics—these

were our themes. We have many times saved the nation without a farthing in our pockets, and tranquillized Europe while our teeth were chattering in our heads. Those nights had a relish of happiness in them even at the time; the memory of them now is precious to me.

I waited some considerable time, after the queen's death, in expectation that my pension would be paid to me as before. The allowance made by her majesty to others had, as I was told, been continued. Wearied, at length, and not so fearful that I had been overlooked, as suspecting I had been purposely neglected, I waited upon Sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, and in no obsequious manner demanded to know the reason of the discontinuance of my pension. He gave me to understand that I was no longer to expect it; but declined to satisfy me as to the reason why it was withheld. Upon this, I took the opportunity of reproaching him, in no measured terms, for his perfidiousness—for this man had, three years before, voluntarily renewed the promise he had made to me when I lived with Lord Tyrconnel of giving me an appointment; which promise, I need not add, he had never fulfilled.

He listened to me with perfect calmness.

"Have you yet made your peace with Lord Tyrconnel?" he inquired.

"Made my peace, Sir Robert!—what do you mean? But I have not."

"It is not likely, then, that you will?"

"Nothing less. I have done with him."

"Then Mr. Savage," with a low bow, "good morning. I have nothing to say."

"And yet you can say more than you mean, Sir Robert, which I cannot. I disdain you. I, at least, am candid."

I left him in a rage, his cringing sycophants, with whom the chamber was crowded, making an instant alley for me as I passed, and wondering, doubtless, whence the maniac could have sprung (if out of Bedlam, surely the man must have had more discretion), bold enough to beard a minister in his own house.

Dim twilight, now—let the darkness (for who can stay

it?) come on. It comes apace. My affairs were now in a disastrous plight. My friends were becoming tired of extending their aid, and I had been long sick of receiving their assistance. Some urged me to a resolute exercise of my talents. Johnson was of the number of these. He was young, and knew not the crushing operations of necessity. He had constant employment from Cave, and although often without money or credit, and therefore without a dinner, he need never be more than forty-eight hours without a supply. He was a man of extensive learning, of great abilities, and of a searching mind, and accordingly had sharp tools, and exhaustless materials at hand. I was a man of no learning—of talents, such as they were, that, like the fairies or spirits in an Opera which appear to the sound of soft music, would only serve me to the harmonious tinkle of a verse; and, such as they were, curses on the cursed life I had led! they were not such as they had been. But who, if his mind were able to project designs that would require months to their completion, and not only to project, but to prepare and adjust them—who could sit down day by day to labour them, when, every hour in each day, his inward economy, like the daughters of the horse-leech, was crying, "Give, give?" A man's mind, that he may do any thing worth troubling the printer withal, must be without the pressure or the prospect of immediate want. When I have urged this to my friends, having some considerable and advantageous performance at heart, wishing anxiously to pursue it, they have replied,—

"But what use, what end? Where would be the wisdom, Savage, of advancing money to you, which, so soon as you had got it, you would squander? Do we not know you? Come, confess!—would the work be begun, while a shilling lingered behind its fellows?"

And if not to them, I have been fain to confess it to myself—it would not. The first act of prudence is to come.

"Let not a man at any time deceive himself," says the world. If the deceit contributes to his happiness, and is innocent, or lessens his misery, though the deceit be vain

and idle, let him encourage it, says one, who, had he not often deceived himself, had perished by his own hand long since. But I had friends who would sometimes raise the veil—who would come to the common sense of the matter—who would speak the words of truth and soberness, and be hanged to 'em. They would tell me, when I opened my plans before them, that large designs required long reflection—that they feared I was not exactly qualified for this—that I was not precisely the man for that; they would remind me that I had failed before, and caution me against making a second mistake. But this, at a time, when the greatest mistake I could make would have been to call for a dinner, and imagine I could pay for it, or betake myself to a bed and suppose I had any right there. Surely the hearts of these despicable comforters (for there are many such in the world) might serve as marble for a monument to Patience. I see her sitting thereon, smiling at Grief.

Well; at last I was reduced to the utmost extremity. From my best friends, or rather, from those who best had it in their power to serve me, I had kept the knowledge of my miserable condition as long as I could; but it was no longer a secret. In this imminence of my affairs, several of them, including Sir Edward Langley and Burridge, met together to devise some plan for my relief. Let any six or seven men assemble for the purpose of framing a scheme for the assistance of their common friend, and ten to one, unless they be men of singular humanity, all delicacy towards the object of their intended bounty is speedily dismissed and forgotten. The result of their deliberations, as to what should be done with me, was this. They proposed, amongst them, to subscribe fifty guineas a year for me (Mr. Pope having offered himself to pay twenty guineas out of it), on condition that I would leave London, under a promise never to return, and retire into Wales, where living, they said, (and life they might have added) was cheap. Langley was deputed to make this proposition to me. He acquitted himself bravely—and basely. He would accept it, he told me, were he in my place; indeed, in my circumstances, he should be glad to snatch at any thing to

keep body and soul together. He thought he was telling a lie, but he spoke the truth. He *would* have been glad. Body *and* soul! He had not kept them together, when he waited upon me!

I resisted the proposition with firmness, which they termed obstinacy; and with warmth, which they called indignation. I pleaded, which was true, that I had already made some progress in a second tragedy, on the subject of Sir Thomas Overbury; that I could proceed with it more to my own satisfaction in London, where I had friends; —that, when completed, I should be on the spot to superintend its preparation at the theatre; that I had no passion for the country;—and, finally, that I did not care to receive any thing at the hands of men, who proposed, at the same time, to tie *my* hands.

No! I must go to Wales. I would not. They gave me time to re-consider my determination, and in the meanwhile allowed me a pittance to subsist upon.

One morning, Burridge called upon me. He found me dressed in a horseman's coat, sitting over my tankard. We retired to a private room. I was no longer a favourite of the old man. Throughout my whole course, he had attended me, at short intervals, with exhortations and remonstrances, which, unheeded or laughed aside, were succeeded by prophetic denunciations. I had now, as he believed, fulfilled his predictions, for which he despised me. I bore no love to him because he thought I had fulfilled them. For what man willingly assents to upbraidings of another, signifying that there is no longer any hope in him? Even now, late though it be—when I return to London, will I make the old prophet pause ere he again feel the pulse of futurity, and pronounce death to a living patient.

"Well, sir," said he, "after all, perhaps (gods! how like a highwayman you look!), perhaps, after all, there may be no necessity for your accepting the subscription that goes so much against you. Always busy in your affairs, Dick—always thinking of you, for *I* cannot forget old times! I have waited upon your mother, and seen her. I have seen her."

"May I ask you, Mr. Burridge," said I, "in what manner the sight of my mother connects itself with my affairs?"

"I told her your present destitute condition," he replied; "and put it to her whether her son ought to be beholden to charity."

"You have done well, sir," said I, turning from him. "Has my destitute condition, as you call it, been yet proclaimed at Charing Cross?"

"Ah, well! I am used to this language, Mr. Savage. But hear me. I have moved her thus far. She says, if you will make a solemn promise never to see her again, or to trouble her in any way—if, further, you will address a letter to her, expressing your regret at having persecuted her (she used too strong a word there, I admit), she will allow you something handsome for life. But she will not be bound, by any written engagement, to do so. Come, now, I see you are reasonable. Well, so, that's a dear fellow."

I replied with humility: "When I was an infant, she attempted to smother me;—when I was a lad, to transport me, perhaps, to get me murdered; when I became a man, she tried to hang me! My life, you know, sir, has been a long misery of her making. But all this is past."

"It's all past," said Burridge.

"And my present destitute condition—you would advise me to close with her terms?"

"I would. Oh, Dick! cursed resentments!—no good comes of 'em. Away with 'em!"

"I wish I had a sheet of paper," said I, quietly, "that I might write my regrets."

Burridge rang the bell with alacrity, and ordered writing materials.

"You said, I think," cried I, flourishing a pen, "that she insists upon a promise on my part that I will never see her again?"

"She said that, I confess," cried Burridge, shrugging his shoulders. "Ah, well! that is a promise may be easily kept, I imagine."

I had already made some progress in the following letter:—

"Madam,

"Your wish will be gratified, though your command is not obeyed. I shall see you no more. Nothing on earth, while I am on it, shall again induce me to come before your sight, or to hold you in mine. I want nothing from you, not even your curse, or your blessing. You have ceased to injure, you shall not serve me. It is too late for you, madam, to commence doing good. If you think not, begin. You will not understand the humanity of it when I tell you, you shall not begin with me. Every benefit would revive a wrong, if not in my mind, certainly in your own. Live! But I am not revengeful. Die, then. How hard am I beset for a wish that may be acceptable to you! If you have a preference, believe that I join in it. One word more. If I know you to be vile, I dare say you think me so. Grant I am right, you will agree with me in this: *If we loved each other, how we should hate ourselves!*

"Your son,

"RICHARD SAVAGE."

"There, sir," said I, handing him the letter; "read that. When you have read it, I will seal and direct, and you will convey it to her."

"What a plague!" cried Burridge, having perused it attentively, taking off his spectacles, and returning them to the case. "Are you mad? I deliver no such letter, I promise you."

"Why not?" said I.

"Why not?" in a ferment; "I wouldn't have that heart of yours in my bosom, Mr. Savage, for all the wealth of Mexico. She is old, sir; old and feeble—scarce a vestige of the woman she was."

"Not outwardly, Mr. Burridge; look within—there she is unchanged."

"And so are you."

"Thank God—yes!"

"What, then," said he, gazing at me incredulously, "are you relentless? Were she to send for you, to implore you to exchange forgiveness with her, would you not take her hand?"

"Ay, sir; I would take her by the hand—by both hands, and bidding her look upon the wretch she had made, curse her from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot! Against forgiveness of that woman in this world, I have an oath recorded, where she will never see it—in heaven."

"For the love of heaven, of which you speak," cried Burridge, stopping his ears, "no more. This is too much."

"It is," I replied. "I spoke too strongly—but you make me speak. Listen to me, sir. You are a very old, and have been a very good friend of mine. I am indebted to you for more benefits than, I dare say, you remember. I do not forget one. *We* must not part without shaking hands. But if you and your friends, who are pleased to call themselves my friends likewise—with what truth let the inhuman indelicacy of their conduct towards me declare—if you and your friends think, because you have made, or are about to make, a paltry subscription for me, saddled with wantonly devised and idle conditions, that the price I am to pay for it is to be the mortification of my feelings, the outrage of my pride, the rasping of my soul, be it known to you and to them, I will not pay that price, and I reject your subscription."

"We mean no such thing; I, at least, have no such meaning," cried Burridge, affected. "Dick! Dick! I *have* loved you, and I cannot well forego a lingering something *here* for you still. Your pride has been your bane, and will yet be your ruin. I hope not. Good bye!—I forgot;—Langley and I waited on Mr. Pope yesterday. He desired me to tell you he wished to see you. He has your welfare at heart. To have acquired the friendship of such a man as Pope——"

"Is, perhaps, to have deserved it, Mr. Burridge."

"Ah, well! Dick Savage, you *could* deserve even higher than that."

"Good bye. Say no more. I can and will. But time—time——"

"Flies, Dick; and the wind of his wings overthrows many a brave fellow while he is busy, poising his good intentions."

What Burridge declined doing, a less scrupulous acquaintance undertook. I was so well pleased with my letter, that I despatched it to my mother. What effect it produced, I know not. Had I possessed the means of satisfying myself upon this point, I am not sure that I had cared to inquire.

I paid my respects to Mr. Pope on the following morning. He received me with his usual gentle kindness. To borrow a word from the nursery, his *fractious* peevishness of which the world has heard so much—a consequence of his wretched health—was never exhibited before me. During a considerable time we discoursed of general or of indifferent things, Pope evidently reluctant to enter upon the business for which he had summoned me thither. At length he began by lamenting the necessity I was under of being beholden to my friends; "some of whom, to tell you the truth, sir," he added, "I except Mr. Burridge—appear determined that the obligation they intend you to be under to them, shall not lie heavy upon you. Is there no way of averting the necessity of being obliged to them at all?"

I assured him that I felt the cruel situation in which I was placed, more than I could express; that there was nothing I could do, that I would not attempt, rather than be degraded into a puppet for others to play what tricks they liked with. Upon hearing this, Pope walked to an adjoining table, from which he took an open letter.

"This," said he, reseating himself, "is a letter I have taken the liberty of writing for you," he hesitated and turned slightly pale—Pope always turned pale when he should have blushed—"I think," he resumed, "it is nearly what you yourself would write. You can copy it here. You know Sir William Lemon?"

"I do."

"It is to him—to be shown to Lord Tyrconnel."

What! any man take a pen between his fingers, and form letters, and frame words, and connect sentences, and express sentiments, or opinions, or feelings in my name, and without consulting me—and I called upon to scratch a transcript of this emanation from another man's mind, and to

adopt it into my own, as when one jack-pudding sets fire to the tow at Smithfield, another jack-pudding swallows it! I received the letter into my hand with a very ill grace.

But when I came to read it! Why, this was one of the vilest letters! What is it in human nature that causes a man to require his *friend* to do things that he dares not ask another; or if he dare, that he knows another could not be found mean enough to do? I blushed for Pope. I could do nothing, for a time, but blush. My words, that were rushing from my bosom, almost choked me. He saw my condition, and would have taken the paper out of my hands. I retained it.

"This letter," I said at last, "is to Sir William Lemon. In it I confess my sorrow that I offended Lord Tyrconnel. I feel none. I beg his pardon. I will not. I crave his assistance. I despise it, and him. I hope he will 'not steel his heart against so small a relation.' D——n him! What care I what he does with his heart for or against me? So small a relation? How small? slightly connected—or small—poor, low in the world? Upon my honour, Mr. Pope, I take this letter to be remarkably small. Suppose I tear it into very small pieces, and fling it out of your window?" and I did so.

Pope attempted to excuse himself, but lamely; and afterwards to rally me upon my pride, but very awkwardly. He must pardon me for saying he looked smaller than usual upon that occasion.

I explained to him, that even had my conduct towards Lord Tyrconnel been culpable—as, upon my life, I believed the fault to have lain entirely on his side, yet that the letter I had just destroyed was not such an one as a gentleman, however greatly in distress, should have written. I put it to him, whether Lord Tyrconnel and Mrs. Brett would not be too glad to produce such a letter, as an answer to every charge I had brought, or might hereafter choose to bring, against them?

I wonder Pope bore with my plain speech as he did; but what is a man to do or to say—a man of sense and feeling, when it is shown to him, all on a sudden, that he has done

a very foolish thing, and has just been counselling his friend to do a very base one?

Without entering, therefore, perhaps, into my feelings, or appeasing them, he saw at once the reasonableness of my objections, and agreed with me, that the letter was rightly destroyed, and assuring me of his continued friendship, and that I might rely upon twenty guineas a-year from him, he permitted me to depart.

But not these assurances could heal the wound he had inflicted upon me. This was the unkindest cut of all. I could not believe that Pope imagined I could transcribe such a letter, or permit it to be sent in my name. It was a sly manner—I had another word than sly at my pen's end, a more appropriate word, but I forbear—it was a sly manner of telling me his opinion of the figure I had made in my quarrel with Lord Tyrconnel.

I could not help relating the substance of this interview to Johnson.

"Mr. Johnson," said I, in conclusion, "had fortune treated you as she has dealt by me—had your own imprudence, which, perhaps, is my case, reduced you to my extremity, and you had been requested to transcribe such a letter, believing the appeal made in it would prove successful—would you have done so?"

He made one of his ugly, majestic faces, threw his arms up into the air, and took the room in three giant strides.

"No!" in a burst of thunder. "No! I would not."

"And you do not think the better of Pope for urging me to do so?"

"I admire Pope, Mr. Savage; you know it. He is a man of genius; but, sir, I do *not* think the better of Pope —I think very much the worse of Pope."

Pope will turn pale, indeed, should he ever read this.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN WHICH RICHARD SAVAGE TAKES HIS FAREWELL OF LONDON, AND OF ONE WHOM IT HAD BEEN WELL IF HE HAD STRIVEN TO DESERVE: IN CONCLUSION, HIS GOOD RESOLUTIONS, AND HOW THEIR EFFECT WAS ANTICIPATED.

THE reader has probably inquired, ere this, what has become of Miss Wilfred? It is very likely he may likewise have desired to know whether I stopped short in my pursuit of the dear fugitive, or renewing it, whether I cast myself at the feet of one whom I had so deeply and wantonly injured, and succeeded in obtaining her forgiveness. I will satisfy his curiosity.

My rupture with Lord Tyrconnel had been long foreseen by me, but in no manner provided against, so that, no sooner had I left his house than I was again flung back upon the world, without any available resource but such as the knowledge of my quarrel with my patron would immediately extinguish. Still, I did not relax my endeavours to discover whither Elizabeth had flown. Perhaps, the knowledge that my recent misfortune (for so I knew she would deem it) would plead in my behalf, somewhat mitigated the remorse I could not but feel at having so basely insulted her; and anxious beyond all things else in the world to clear myself (before heaven, this is the truth!) from the imputation by others, or the suspicion in her own mind—that I had coolly meditated a design against her honour, I continued my search with unabated perseverance for a month—but in vain. By this time, I was reduced to great necessity. Tyrconnel, base beast! had seized upon my clothes, and I was compelled to lie hid in obscurity. As these necessities became extreme, a sense of utter abasement, of deep shame, overcame me. Had I known where to have found her—could I have presented myself before her—I had been ashamed to meet her eyes—those eyes that I had once loved to gaze upon. "Coxcomb once, and now poverty-stricken, out-at-elbows

rogue! thou wilt now, perhaps, prance forth, thy hat under thy arm,—so will its defects better be hidden (but where is thy flowing periwig?) and renew thy vile proposition: or wilt thou rather play the penitent, and sue for leave to bring with thee a demure parson, albeit fee from thy pocket will never touch the sacerdotal palm?"

Thus would I rate myself. But often denouncing one's own vice or folly, makes one no better, although many appear to think so, and although I derived a sort of sorry self-esteem from the process.

I heard at last that she was living with Lady Trevor; and shortly afterwards received a letter from her. It was full of the most tender forgiveness—of the most persuasive earnestness of love. She appealed to my reason, to my feelings, to my pride. She exhorted me to exercise, with diligence, the talents which, she said, heaven had bestowed upon me—to strive against the seductions of vice, to yearn after the rewards of virtue. She assured me she would never be the wife of another, and told me that when I was worthy of myself I was more than worthy of her.

O, thou woman of all the world! thou who, if all the world were perplexed with fiends—with Bretts—would yet redeem the name of woman! Lost, indeed, have I been, since I lost thee! Alas! alas! that a man should bring himself to this: that the exhortation, even of one whom he loves better than life should be—not thrown away, for it is treasured—but—laid to a heart which has no longer the power to clasp it. The sinking soul (so to speak) descending with eyes upturned, sees the heaven it covets, and falls into bottomless perdition which it sees not—but feels.

I returned such an answer to this letter as a man, who had yet a heart in his bosom with a throb in it, and eyes in his head that have not lost the cause, nor the course of tears, may be supposed, with a beating heart and eyes that saw not what his hand wrote, to have written. I protested, with a solemnity of truth it was impossible to doubt, that I had not known a moment's peace since our separation;—I expressed my deep and sincere contrition for the insult I had offered her;—I declared that my reverence of her good-

ness was even greater, if the sentiments were separable, than my love of herself. I promised to conform to her wishes, which were my own.

If I did not do so, it is because I could not;—I strove and failed. My will was toward good—stood tiptoe, with hands out-stretched towards the sky. I will have no philosopher, or fool, though he have been brayed in a mortar, to tell me I had not failed had I more strongly striven. I tell him nay. The will, could it do as it pleased, would be an angel in heaven, and not only so, but worthy of heaven. Sometimes I think—is it now too late? that had I prayed—but prayers were ever far from me—wings had been lent to will, which might then have been indeed an angel!

I received other letters from time to time, and answered them in a like manner. But days glided away, and years—and my promises remained unfulfilled; nay, at the expiration of each year, there was less chance of their fulfilment. I saw her, indeed, several times, at long intervals, when I would not have been seen by her for the world; but never from the moment of our separation till the evening I am about to record, did I speak to her, or hear her voice. I must mention, also, that I had received many packets containing money, which were left for me at a coffee-house, during the above period, and that it was only after this evening that I guessed whence they came. That I guessed rightly I am so assured that I will not say my pride forbade me to ascertain. My pride ought to have done something for me. I have been a kind and indulgent protector of it. I fear, like a spoiled child, it has flown in the face of its parent.

And now I come to the

> "—— last scene of all
> That ends this strange eventful history."—

My kind dictatorial friends must have their way. I must be banished from London for ever. I should do no good there. They would have it so. Remonstrance or complaint, or resentment was useless. I was compelled, therefore, to feign an acquiescence in their wishes: to

feign, because what they intended as perpetual banishment, I designed should be merely temporary rustication. My intention was to retire to Wales, and finish my tragedy: that completed, to return to London, to bring it upon the stage, and with the profits in my fist to wait upon my persecuting benefactors severally, and to thrust into their hands the money they had advanced to me.

They had sent a tailor to me to measure me for a new suit of clothes—(that insult shall be discharged at the same time, with the other debts,) and on the following week I was to be wafted to Llanelly.

It was a Sunday afternoon, declining into evening. I had heard—for the room I occupied was a back room on the ground floor, and not as poets use, the garret—I had heard the old woman of the house remark to a neighbour gossip, as she returned home with her baked meat, that it was a fine day. I guessed as much as I lay on my truckle bed; for when the sun shone, a whiter light came down between my wretched casement and a high wall, about a yard in distance from it.

I had a reason for lying a-bed, which your men of spread cloths, your daily raisers of the knife and fork will hardly understand: I was without money or food, and had fared scantily the day before. As the light receded from the window, however, I bethought me of rising; and, since no future opportunity might be afforded me, I resolved upon bending my steps to a spot, a visit to which I had long meditated as a duty. A strange and deep melancholy, which had settled upon my spirits when I awoke in the early morning, and which, though I marshalled my old philosophy to disperse it, increased upon me, as the day wore, favoured my intention, and to St. James's churchyard—to Ludlow's grave therein—I directed my course.

On my way, I met my old friend, Mrs. Martin, with whom I had kept up an acquaintance in adverse times, and in prosperity. She was going to see her son Simon, who had left the army and was now one of the turnkeys of the Fleet Prison, within the liberties of which I had prudently taken my lodging. The worthy old creature

was rejoiced to see me. She recalled old times, and dwelt upon them, crying at one moment, laughing at the next. She wrung my hands, calling me a dear, sweet, unfortunate gentleman, and wanted to force upon me some small money, which her poor hard hands, I doubt not, had earned most hardly. The simple tones, the rapturous phrase of this dear genuine woman affected me, I cannot say how strongly, and I was glad to break away from her, which I did abruptly.

I needed no softening to approach the grave of Ludlow. I hung over it in rapt and mournful reflection. My gentle —my honest friend! whose tender heart, my frowardness, my obstinacy, my ingratitude, had so often made to bleed, whose life was bound up in mine—who loved me! In imagination, I supposed him to have been a witness to all the sufferings I had endured since his eyes closed upon me. That thought (how much more than my misfortunes had ever done!) wrung me. The expectations he had indulged —the hopes he had cherished of me—which, perhaps, thrilled along the thread of life at the very moment it snapped for ever—all destroyed, all come to nought! And this at last! a wretch returning to a dead man's grave, craving a like resolution with himself of the weary flesh into the dust whereof it was composed—it may be (oh, God! there *was* that hideous wish!) an extinction, likewise, of the soul which it contained.

The beadle warned me from the grave once, and again. I retired before him without a word. It was evening service. I entered the church modestly, for the temple of God in England is no place for misery that wears old woollen. The woman, whose duty it was to open the pew-doors, was grounded in this religion. She scanned me closely, and contemptuously, but presently motioned me to go into an obscure pew at the entrance of the church. I did so, and was the sole occupant of it during the service. Sinners, who came to pray for the mediation of the meek and lowly Jesus, shrank from the contamination of proximity to me.

How many years since I had entered a church! The

bitterness that sometimes, though not often, possessed me, rose upon my mind as I gazed around me. "Dreadful, decent rogues, the major part of these; mumbling prayers they feel not; trembling upon their knees in mock devotion; uttering and muttering responses to appeals for mercy, whilst their hearts are hatching the young of wrath and persecution, which soon with strong-plumed pinion shall go forth to devour and to destroy."

But these unworthy thoughts dispersed, were chased away when the psalm was given out; when the organ heaved forth its volumes, its throes of ravishing and still-swelling sound,—when the accordant voices of the children gushed out, making one full, concurrent, sublime, descant of prayer, of praise, of petition. My heart wept within me from all its issues; my soul sank prostrate before the altar. I grasped the partition with my hands or I should have fallen upon the ground; the sweat hung heavy upon my forehead, a trembling shook my whole frame.

Dark as was the corner into which I had slunk, the pew-opener saw my ghastly face through the obscurity. She made signs to me to leave the church; but I stood, or rather, continued upright, where I was, spell-bound, fixed. To have left the place, I must have been dragged thence.

Nor did I recover my calmness during the delivery of the sermon. The preacher was a simple, unaffected, and yet earnest man; he spoke of truths that I had heard when I was a boy, and in almost the self-same language. I had not been a scoffer, for I never was a trifler or a fool. Devoutly believing in a God, and knowing perfectly well the beauty and dignity of virtue, still I had contented myself, during my whole life, with avowing my belief when it was necessary, and maintaining my opinions when they were called for. I was not a man in the practice of piety, either to myself or to the world; that is to say, I had never prayed in secret that God might hear, or gone to church that man might see.

Shall I wrong truth so deeply as to assert that this accidental visit to St. James's church made a convert or a penitent of me? No, moved as I was, it was no motion

from heaven that called me thither. It was the memory of the past that smote me, not apprehensions of the future.

The service being ended, I would have left, but had a difficulty in finding my hat. In the meanwhile, a concourse of gaily attired people crowded the aisle. My dress forbade the presumption of thrusting myself amongst them. I was fain, therefore, to wait till they were passed by.

But two or three remained on this side of the church, and these not so advanced towards the entrance as to obstruct the opening of my pew. As I stepped out, a short sharp cry caused me to turn my head. My arm was at the same instant gently, but quickly, laid hold upon.

"Richard!—Mr. Savage!"

Had I not known the voice, I had hardly recognised that face—though it was the face of Elizabeth Wilfred. Not that the face was changed, but its expression, which was of the most profound melancholy. The joy of seeing me (for joy it was) irradiated for a moment that aspect of sorrow, making it more sweetly piteous. A heavy groan burst from my bosom when I beheld her;—a groan of shame—of contrition—of despair. But mouths were a-gape, and the old pew-opener was about to interfere. They might well marvel at a recognition between two such persons! I turned, and fled out of the church.

She followed, and overtook me.

"For heaven's sake, dear Richard, do not leave me. I must not lose you again. Stay for me one moment, while I tell the coachman to drive home. Promise me; say that you will wait till I return."

I answered, "I will wait." Perplexed—confounded—I knew not what to do or to say. She came back in a minute.

"Where are you going?" she said; "you must let me accompany you. You are very ill, Richard. I wish you would take my arm. We are observed here."

I knew, for I had seen, that we were observed; indeed, some dozen humane or inquisitive people, who had been standing a short distance from us, were now approaching at several quarters haltingly. A circle would soon have formed around us. I made an effort to rouse myself,

although scarce able to stand, and moved towards the gate of the churchyard, Elizabeth supporting me.

She beckoned to a coach.

"Whither are you going, dear Richard?"

"Home—home; I must go home."

I whispered my direction to the driver, and was helped into the coach. She was instantly at my side.

Few words were exchanged between us, during the time we were in the coach. At intervals, she pressed my hand, which she held between her own, and inquired whether I was better; questions which I answered in the affirmative. And if an unnatural strength, wrought out of a determination to acquit myself with firmness through a fearful impending scene—if this, which I summoned together, and held, may be called being better—I was so.

I dreaded that she should see where I lodged. My squalid wretchedness of figure had been seen: could I have fled, that might have been borne—that had passed. But now, by Heaven! when the coach stopped, was the most terrible moment of my life. Had it been a Tyburn cart, and I in it, about to be paraded before the yelling mob, a craven murderer, I could not have felt a more sickening sense of abject terror.

We got out of the coach. I told the driver to wait, that we might carry the lady to her own house. The wretch bowed to the gentleman with nauseous gravity—a jaw-locked grin. My old woman came to the door, wondering whether her spectacles were bewitched. Such light and such darkness together! "Never had so fine a lady stepped over her threshold before;" so said the old woman on the following day. True, Mrs. Markham, very true!

I borrowed the candle from her, and led the way to my room. Closing the door upon us, I set down the light upon the table, and sank upon a box placed against the wall.

"I am at home. Dearest, best of women, leave me. Elizabeth Wilfred, I implore you, leave me."

"Here?" surveying the apartment with a chilly shudder —"here? O Richard!"

"Here. This is where I live—my home. I am better now."

She came and sat down by my side, and placed her arm around me, the hand resting on my shoulder. I durst not look upon her, and yet I could not help doing so. It was maddening to see that sweet face, as she wiped my damp forehead with her handkerchief, with a smile upon her lips, although her eyes began to fill with tears. Her gentle nature could not bear to see the wretched ruin—the ghastly wreck before her. Her bosom heaved—a sob choked her utterance. She threw herself into my arms, her head upon my breast, and burst into a passion of weeping.

"Great God of heaven! this is too much—too much!" I exclaimed, almost with a shriek—striving to disengage myself; but very gently now, for she would cling to me.

"Elizabeth, if you have pity, if a miserable man may claim——"

"Yes, yes, forgive me, dear Richard, I would not pain you—it is but joy that I have seen you once again."

That dear falsehood might be forgiven. The joy of seeing me! Joy hath its tears, 'tis true; but never such tears upon such a face. The misery of seeing me thus—this drew forth those tears.

She wiped them from her face, and endeavoured at calmness; but sobs would rise at intervals.

"Do let me speak," she said, at length; "you must not stay here. It is not fit that Richard Savage should live here. I have money. What is it, you know, dear sir? You never would permit it to be mentioned. From those we love, I have heard you say, it is a mark of love and of confidence to receive it. I am sure you will not disdain to accept it from me. You will not be so unkind to me as to refuse it. Come, now," tenderly, and looking me appealingly in the face.

This speech, to which at one time I had listened with rapture, now was torture to me to hear. I left my seat hastily. She also arose, and in alarm. Taking her hands between my own, I held her my arms' distance from me, my teeth clenched, my eyes fixed upon her with fond bitterness.

"Thou loveliest, gentlest, most cruel creature!" I exclaimed; "and is it thus you requite the wrong I have

done you? Is it thus you damn me with generosity I deserve not, with tenderness that makes me mad, with pity that blasts me? Am I not sunk enough already—abased—degraded? Oh, Elizabeth! that my brain be not rent in twain, that my heart burst not asunder;—leave me—leave me," and I stamped upon the ground; "on my knees, I pray you to leave me."

"I would not offend you for the world," she cried, in agitation, wringing my hands; "for mercy's sake, compose yourself. I will leave you. Do you wish, Richard, that I should leave you?"

"Oh, my God! yes—yes—yes—" falling upon the ground at her feet, and dashing my fists upon the floor, "I cannot bear this—cannot bear it."

"*Hysterica passio!* down, thou climbing sorrow!"

But it would not down. Such ravings as devils might have heard—perhaps, did hear, rejoicingly, followed.

She was at my side—on her knees at my side. "I will go," she said, attempting to soothe me. "I will go. I did not know my presence would have disturbed you so, or I would not have intruded. Pray forgive me, I will rid you of my sight directly; but I cannot leave you till you are more yourself." That piteous imploring face close to mine, those hands pressing my burning temples! Nature will have way. With a deep groan I hid my face, and wept aloud like a child. Oh! that then the world had passed away from me!

How long it was ere I recovered from this paroxysm I know not. When I did so, I discovered Elizabeth sitting near me on the chest, trembling violently, her hands clasped before her, and paler than ever before I saw the face of woman.

I arose collected, the man of yesterday, or of to-morrow, and seated myself by her side. "Elizabeth," I said, "you have witnessed a strange weakness. I am ashamed of myself; but it is the first and last." Then, kissing her hands fervently, "I dare not call you my love, though that

I love you, how much more than my life, Heaven is my witness, who knows how valueless life is to me."

She sighed. "Oh, Richard! not now such words. We are friends, are we not?"

"Blessed, admirable woman, yes: and I am now happy beyond expression that I have seen you once more before I leave London, perhaps, for ever. I thank God for it, and shall learn to thank Him for all things, knowing that His providence watches over me. Our meeting proves it."

It was more than an hour after this ere she left me. Saying she would see me on the following day, she, at length, arose. I handed her to the door, and passing my arm round her waist, drew her gently towards me, and kissed her.

"God will bless you, my Elizabeth, even for your kindness to so sad a wretch as Richard Savage."

"You must not talk so, Richard," she replied. "He will bless you, too, when you ask His blessing."

When I could no longer hear the coach-wheels, I returned to my room. She had left her purse upon the seat. By mistake, I thought, at the first instant—but no. All the blood in my body rushed to my face. Any other man in the world would have shrunk, probably, even to think how he looked at such a moment. Not I. I raised the bit of glass from the mantel-piece, and gazed at this proud, honourable, lofty—scoundrel! Pitiful—very pitiful was that countenance!

Averse as I had been from leaving London, from this night I was as anxious to go as my friends could be that I should be gone. I saw Elizabeth Wilfred every day until my departure. I promised a thorough amendment of my life, and intended to set about it. She believed me, and was happy.

My friend Johnson attended me to the coach, murmuring comfort and philosophy, whilst the tears stood in his eyes. Nor was I less affected. I embraced him tenderly, and springing into the coach, if not with a light, with a buoyant heart, I bade farewell to London for, as I believed and designed, a short time. Sight and sound of the vast

city were soon lost to me. Longer, O London! have I kept from thee than I contemplated; but a few days longer, and I shall be with thee once again. Already the rumble of the leathern vehicle fills my ears—mine eyes are already full of thee. I come. Foes who have rejoiced that I retired, friends who will lament that I return—I come. A little older—a little sadder—a little, also, wiser.

I have done. For why relate how time has gone with me since that day? Wherefore tell how my subscribers (all except Pope,) have treated me? I despise them too much to resent their baseness upon paper. To their faces I will speak, telling them that they professed to serve, and have betrayed me—that they proffered protection, and deserted me—that they engaged to support, and starved me.

Were this a moral age, and it is not—and I a moralist, and I am none—the world might derive some profitable instruction from the long commentary I should append to this familiar abstract of the life of Richard Savage, which I am now about to close. For, oh! patient and courteous reader, (and you must be both if you have followed me thus far,) there *is* a moral in it.

Time lost or wasted—opportunities neglected or despised—talents misused or for the most part misapplied—a life of debts, of dependence, of disgrace, of distress—the end a gaol—surely, though it be an old lesson, there is scope here for a new version of it.

Be it mine to show that the lesson has not been lost upon me. Let my future course manifest, that a life begun and continued in shame, may yet be completed with honour. But to prophesy of my future well-doing in a gaol is somewhat premature. I will not do so, lest the world, to employ Milton's simile, should pronounce me to be like old Proteus, who could utter oracles only after he was caught and bound.

A security for my future good behaviour will be found in these pages, after they have passed into print. Should I swerve, or fall off, will they not rise in judgment against me?

For what they contain, or for their author, at present I ask no allowance. I deprecate pity or compassion; I am

proof against censure. But should there be one, into whose hands these pages may fall, virtuous himself, and the cause of virtue in others;—a good father of good children—a good husband of a good wife—should such a man be disposed altogether to condemn me, to him I say in words of my own, which he will find upon my title-page:—

> —— no mother's care
> Shielded my infant innocence with pray'r;
> No father's guardian hand my youth maintain'd,
> Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice restrain'd.

Gentle reader,—farewell!

CONCLUSION.

FROM MR. THOMAS DAGGE TO MR. SAMUEL JOHNSON, TO THE CARE OF MR. EDWARD CAVE, ST. JOHN'S GATE, LONDON.

Respected Sir!

Your letter requests a more particular account of the melancholy events that have recently taken place in this prison; and you wish me to communicate as much as I know of Mr. Savage's manner of life during his stay in Bristol, and of his behaviour while under confinement.

I hasten to comply with your wishes; but I regret to inform you that I have no particular information to impart, as to the course of life pursued by your friend, before he entered this gaol. All that I know—for Mr. Savage seldom adverted to any circumstances connected with his stay at Bristol—has been derived from Mr. Sondes, a gentleman who was very much the friend of Mr. Savage, who accompanied him to prison, and who occasionally visited him, until within the last two months when, I believe, a misunderstanding arose between them, respecting a satire which Mr. Savage had threatened to write against the inhabitants of this city.

Mr. Sondes informed me that Mr. Savage had led a very irregular and dissipated life, since his coming to Bristol;

that several subscriptions had been entered into for him, the money raised by which he had squandered in the most thoughtless manner; that he had frequently been brought to the lowest state of necessity—that is to say, to the brink of starvation; that his friends, however, willing to serve him, had been exceedingly perplexed to know how they could do so, seeing that he was not to be trusted with money; and that they had at last desisted, satisfied that nothing whatever was to be done with him, or for him.

He added, that whatever was the distress of Mr. Savage, and notwithstanding that it was brought on, for the most part, by his own imprudence, he bore the misery it entailed upon him with fortitude, which might be called magnanimity. He was at all times self-possessed and cheerful in company, commonly leading the conversation, which he sustained with the utmost sprightliness and spirit. He frequently, before his own immediate friends, made voluntary confessions of his want of foresight and worldly wisdom, and flattered himself with promises of amendment; flattered himself, because however earnestly and sincerely he might, at the moment, have designed to work out his good intentions, it seemed that he never had resolution sufficient to set about so doing.

I have already, sir, told you that he was brought to this gaol accompanied by Mr. Sondes. This was in the latter end of January last. He had been arrested at the suit of a Mrs. Read, the hostess of a small public house in an obscure part of this city, for a debt of eight pounds. In the hope, that by an application to some of his friends in London and elsewhere, he should be enabled to defray the debt, he had been staying at a sponging-house during the space of a fortnight; but not succeeding (although he himself told me the celebrated Mr. Nash of Bath kindly sent him five pounds) he at last made up his mind to render himself to prison.

His appearance, sir, greatly prepossessed me in his favour. I was much impressed, if I may use the phrase, with the modest dignity of his deportment, and charmed by his mildness and affability. I allotted him the best room then

vacant, and requested that he would do me the favour, so long as it was his misfortune to remain in my custody, of taking his meals at my table.

I hope, sir, you will not think that I am unduly taking credit to myself for any kindness I may have shown this unfortunate gentleman; but I am anxious that you should have the pleasure of knowing that your friend was made as comfortable as a man, in his unhappy condition, and in such a place, could be.

Mr. Savage very soon appeared to make himself perfectly easy, accommodating himself to the novel situation in which he was cast, with extraordinary readiness. A considerable portion of each day was spent in his own room, reading such books, (and he was in no wise particular as to the subjects on which they treated), as I could borrow for his amusement—or in writing. His evening was commonly passed with myself and with Mr. Price, our chaplain, a gentleman of great piety and benevolence.

But sometimes he would take the range of the gaol, and employ his hours in conversation with the other prisoners; and it is observable that he made no distinction, as to his readiness to talk, or willingness to listen, between such as were, like himself, confined for debt, or criminals. For either, indeed, he would with pleasure perform any office of kindness or of humanity that might be requested of him, writing letters for them to their creditors or prosecutors, whether in his own person or in theirs, of intercession or of entreaty. I must not omit to add, since you wish so particular an account of your friend's proceedings, that whenever he had money, he would treat them to liquor, of which he would himself partake; upon which occasions he took the chair, presiding over his associates (who, you may be sure, one and all loved him) with great seeming hilarity.

On one occasion, I remember, Mr. Sondes visited him when he was thus disposed. Mr. Sondes ventured a remonstrance, reminding him how he degraded himself by keeping such low and base company. Mr. Savage turned upon him, and said very seriously (these, to the best of my remembrance, were the words):

"Sir, I thought you knew that I permit neither dictation nor remonstrance—no, nor the gentlest reprehension from any man—least of all from any man who calls himself my friend. I have seen a great deal more of life, from the highest to the lowest, than yourself; and I have found what you call base company in high places as well as low. Let me tell you, Sondes," he added, more gaily, "poverty makes not so many rogues as riches make fools. What will you lay, there is not better material in any one of these rogues, out of which a good man might have been made, than exists in you or me? I see no more virtue in bawling 'vice!' than wisdom in patting one dog, because another's mad over the way."

I hasten to relate that of which you require the most particular information.

On the evening of the 24th of July, Mr. Savage, Mr. Price, and I were enjoying a cheerful glass, when one of my men brought up a letter to Mr. Savage, which had just been delivered by the postman. Mr. Savage had for some days past been congratulating himself on the prospect of his speedy release from this place, and of his return to London. He told us that Mr. Pope had directed his debts to be looked into, with a view to their settlement, and that he had furnished him with a correct list of them. You may imagine, sir, the pleasure of Mr. Price and myself, when, upon taking the letter into his hands, we heard the delighted words "from Pope!" proceed from his lips.

Alas, sir! our pleasure was not only premature, but short-lived. As he read the letter, his countenance turned from pale to red by turns, and when he had completed its perusal, he emptied his glass, and arose hastily without a word.

"Good news, sir, I hope?" said Mr. Price.

"You shall see, gentlemen," he replied, throwing the letter towards us. "Nay, you may read it. D—tion! crooked little rascal!" muttering other words which I could not hear, as he paced the room.

The letter was filled with warm resentment of what Mr. Pope called the ingratitude of Mr. Savage. It seems, he

charged him with having complained of Mr. Pope's treatment of him to one Henley, a person for whom the writer expressed a very great contempt; and the letter concluded by saying that he should do no more for Mr. Savage; and desired never to hear of or to see him again.

"Why, sir, there must be some mistake here," observed Mr. Price, when he had read the letter. "This is a gross calumny. We have ourselves heard you many times speak in the highest terms of Mr. Pope!"

"No, Mr. Price," he replied, and now we observed an angry white upon his face, his eyes starting forth wildly; "there is no mistake—there is no calumny—nor shall you again hear me speak in high terms of Mr. Pope. Why, the base distortion! the rascally, little, awry rogue! And, because he desires to discontinue his vile twenty guineas, he must trump up this poor lie! But this is like him, sir—this is his way. The fellow's soul is more warped than his carcass."

I was grieved to hear him speak thus of Mr. Pope, to whom he was undoubtedly under great obligation, and of whose kindness he had hitherto entertained so just a sense. I was half minded to speak; but he broke forth again.

"He wanted prostration, I take it," he cried with a laugh that was quite shocking; "come, when am I to commence grovelling? When am I to begin to crawl? Why not now? Mr. Dagge," turning round sharply upon me, "I owe you many kindnesses. I esteem you. You remind me in person and in heart of one whom I am never likely to forget. What say you?"

"I know not what you mean, sir," I replied.

"You remind me of Ludlow—a good fellow in his day. Will you have me fall at your feet? Will you have me lick your shoe-latchet? Shall I down? Shall I down?"

"For God's sake, Mr. Savage!" said I, rising and taking his hand. He was absolutely, sir, about to throw himself at my feet.

"Very well—you will not. I thank you!" and he wrung my hand. "You are a worthy man."

He turned aside, and walked to the other end of the

room, but presently returning, seized the candlestick, and hurried to the door. "Good night, gentlemen; good night!"

He took Mr. Pope's letter with him. We saw him no more that evening.

On the following morning I was told that Mr. Savage desired to see me. I went up to him. He was in bed. He requested that I would be so kind as to forward a letter, which he handed me, to the post-office. It was addressed to Mr. Pope. He looked extremely dispirited and unwell. I inquired how he felt.

"Acute pains in the back, and an oppression on the chest," he replied; "they will go off. I fear I made a fool of myself last night. I was drunk. I have answered Pope's charges, but the letter deserved no reply."

In the evening, hearing that he had not touched his dinner, which had been sent up to him, I waited upon him again; I feared he might be seriously ill, and begged him to tell me whether he was so.

"Yes—yes," was his answer. "I was about to say I fear I am growing worse—a strange word from a man to whom life has been long a burden. Shall I add to the many obligations I am under to you, Mr. Dagge, by requesting you to let me have a sheet or two of writing-paper? I want to send a letter to my friend, Mr. Johnson."

He said this very languidly. You may believe, sir, I was concerned to hear him speak in a tone so unusual, and with so much earnestness, of such a trifle. However, I provided him with the paper, and he wrote a letter to you, which was despatched that night, and which, it is needless to say, you received.

He was so evidently worse the next day, that we called in a doctor. This gentleman, when he came down to us, gave a very unsatisfactory account of his patient. He said there was inflammation in the chest which might be reduced; but that Mr. Savage was suffering from a fever on the spirits.

"That is your phrase for a broken heart?" inquired Mr. Price.

The doctor nodded his head.

"If he do not rally, he is gone," said he.

Upon this, Mr. Price thought it high time that he should attend Mr. Savage, and offer that spiritual consolation of which all of us, in the prospect of death, have so great a need. He was with him more than an hour, and came back to me in great concern.

"The poor gentleman," said he, "is unfit to die. He will not listen to me. When I implored him to humble himself before his Maker, he started up in the bed crying, 'I will hear no such impious talk. What did God say to Job out of the whirlwind?—"Gird up now thy loins, and answer me like A MAN;"—and like a man must I strive to meet my Maker.' When he grew more calm, I ventured to speak of his mother. He gazed at me long and earnestly, as one to whom a new train of thought has suddenly presented itself. He knitted his brows, but not in anger, and nodded his head two or three times slowly. 'Leave me, Mr. Price,' he said, turning from me, 'I will think of that. Yes, I must see to that.'"

A melancholy change was observable in him on the following morning. He said, that during the night he had been visited by horrible dreams, and desired to be left alone with Mr. Price. The worthy clergyman found him in a happy frame of mind. He forgave his mother freely and entirely, and protested with solemnity that he was now at peace with all the world.

"Except one person," he added. "Mr. Price, I want your help to untie this knot in my heart. I feel, spite of myself, resentment against Lord Tyrconnel. Wrongs may be forgiven—are forgiven; but insults rankle most—and last."

It was not long before Mr. Price wrought him to perfect charity.

"Now, God's will be done with me," he said, "let me strive for pardon for myself. I have been a wicked sinner. If I might live—but that is idle. God's will be done."

In the afternoon, I ventured to look in upon him. He called me towards him in a faint voice, extending his hand. I placed mine in it. He pressed my hand with both his

own fervently, and thanked me in the most moving terms for what he was pleased to call my humanity and Christian kindness towards him.

"You will oblige me," he said, at length, "by bringing to me all the papers you find in yonder cupboard?"

Before I could bring them to him, he sank down upon the bed in an ecstasy of mental agony, burying his face in the clothes, which he grasped convulsively.

"Oh! I am lonely—I am lonely," he groaned; "how will thy heart—thy heart of tenderness be riven, when thou hearest that I am gone—that I am dead!"

A face more filled with grief, when he again raised it, I never beheld, although it has been my lot to see woe in all its degrees and aspects. He then used these remarkable words:—

> "Yet I will not die raving,—for, alas!
> My whole life was a frenzy——"

Mr. Price thought they were to be met with in Shakespeare, but he cannot find them.

"This," he said presently, taking up a bundle of papers, "is a tragedy, completed when I was in Wales. Mr. Dagge, I insist upon your acceptance of it. But I must have your sacred promise, that, should any overture be made to you from London, for the purchase of it, you will receive whatever may be offered."

I would have declined the present, on such terms, but he was not to be denied. (I must beg you, sir, to take notice that nothing on earth but a desire to give you the fullest information of the last moments of Mr. Savage, could induce me to mention this. Cheerfully will I yield possession of the play for the lowest sum that may be named; for, if I may be so bold as to say so, I loved Mr. Savage; I honour his memory, and I shall glory in his fame.)

Mr. Price had entered the room while he was speaking.

"And this," he continued, taking up a large packet, "is my own life, written since I have been an inmate of this gaol. How death destroys our projects, and how the prospect of it alters the feelings that generated them! I

intended that it should be published—but no,—that must not be. I wish you, sir, when I am dead, to forward this to Miss Elizabeth Wilfred, at the house of Lord Trevor in London." His voice slightly faltered, "*She* can forgive all."

Mr. Price expressed a strong desire to read it.

"I fear," said Mr. Savage, "you will hardly find its perusal worth your labour. I know not what you will think of it—or of me. Yes, you may, if you please, read it."

And now, sir, I draw towards a close. After this, Mr. Savage sank rapidly. He declined gently, but firmly, all nourishment except some very thin drink, and preserved an almost entire silence. About eight o'clock on the following evening, his hour was come.

Mr. Price was praying aloud by his side, and I, a melancholy bystander, was watching on the other side of the bed, when my sister entered the room and beckoned me toward her. There was a lady below, she whispered to me, just arrived from London, who *must* see Mr. Savage. Ere she had yet finished her brief communication, the lady herself glided into the room like an apparition. It is impossible, sir, to convey to you a notion of her countenance or of her manner. Her step was as light, as noiseless, as though she walked upon the air, and yet her gestures were rapid in the extreme. Her wandering eyes fixed themselves upon the bed, and upon its occupant.

"Sir—sir—good sir—you must let me go to him—Wilfred—Elizabeth Wilfred—come from London—merciful heavens!" She flew towards the bed—I had not the power nor the inclination to detain her.

Mr. Price had been so absorbed in the function of his sacred duty, that he had not heard the poor dear lady. Her visible presence alone aroused him. He gazed at her, as though she had been a phantom or a being of the higher world, and rising hastily, made room for her.

In an instant, the lady was on her knees by the side of Mr. Savage. She placed her arm under his head, and endeavoured, as I think, to raise it upon her bosom, but this her strength did not enable her to accomplish.

"My Richard—my love," she murmured in a voice of